Propugnaculum Pietatis:

THE SAINTS EBENEZER, AND Pillar of HOPE in GOD,

when they have none left in the Creature.

OR, THE

Godly Mans *Crutch* or *Staffe* in Times

Of { Sadning Diſappointments, Sinking Diſcouragements, Shaking Deſolations.

Wherein is largely ſhewed,

The Tranſcendent Excellency of GOD, His Peoples HELP and HOPE:

WITH

The Unparallel'd Happineſs of the SAINTS in their Confidence in Him, overballancing the Worldlings Carnal Dependance both as to *Sweetneſs* and *Safety.*

Pourtray'd in a Diſcourſe on *Pſal.* 146. 5.

By *F. English.*

The Righteous ſhall never be removed, Prov. 10. 30.
But David *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God,* 1 Sam. 30. 6.
Quis ei metus eſt, cui Deus Tutor eſt? Non labefactat mentem humana moleſtatio, quam corroborat divina protectio. *Cypr.*

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Reader,

THE vanity and emptineſs of the Creature, and the excellency and ſufficiency of God, the great and eternal Creatour, are like two Chryſtal Glaſſes, which ſet one againſt the other, give mutual light and illuſtration. And our knowledge of God being more by negation, than comprehenſion in this life, the worlds blackneſs cannot but become a foil to ſet off his beauty with the more ſhining ſplendour, and orient luſtre. Theſe two firſt Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, God ordinarily inſtills in our firſt converſion, and convinceth us of with ſuch

light and evidence, as they carry a remarkable accent with them, and ſhould leave upon us a more powerful and permanent tincture and impreſſion: Yet notwithſtanding ſuch is our dulneſs and ſtupidity in conning theſe our primary and principal leſſons, as we almoſt forget them as ſoon as we have learnt them. For though at our firſt acquaintance and communion with God, before our heads and hands come to be engaged in the world, we are carried out with a vigorous proſecution of the one, and led into an holy contempt and undervaluing of the baſe ſpoils of the other; yet when once we and it come to grow familiars, the intereſt of Heaven and Religion muſt vail and bow the knee to this our beloved darling and favourite. How many ſet out forward and zealous Profeſſors in the waies of godlineſs, as if they had fully meant to have taken the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, whoſe zeal and bleſſedneſs is now not to be found; but of ring-leaders, are proved renegado's, and of firſt, become laſt? They began to run well, until ſtooping to take up the golden Apples in their way, they ſtopt in their Chriſtian race, and acted their parts on the ſtage of profeſſion, like Princes, till the Nuts of worldly pleaſure and gain being thrown

thrown by hand-fulls before them, they diſcovered themſelves no better than Apes. By venturing to nibble at Satans pleaſurable bait, we are often catched with his deadly and deſtroying hook, and by overmuch incumbring our ſelves with the world, we become (the beſt of us) like *Anſelms* bird, which had a ſtone tied to her leg, and pulled her down to earth, as faſt as ſhe attempted an aſcent to Heaven. This heavy weight ſo beſets us, as we cannot run with patience the race ſet before us. So that beſides our initiation, and firſt indoctrinating in the things that are excellent, God is forced ever and anon to become our Monitor, and catechize us anew at the ſchool of the Croſs; in his wilderneſs ſpeaking to our heart, and by his word and works, rubbing up our memories afreſh with the meditations of what we firſt imbibed, though now have loſt the ſcent and ſavour of. And it's no other than free grace, and infinite mercy in our heavenly Father to recall his extravagant Prodigals, who will change their Fathers bread for the worlds husks, and thus go out of Gods bleſſing into the warm Sun. Would we indeed make uſe of the ſpectacles of the word, we might plainly read the inſcription of vanity; yea, vanity of vanities, written

on the forehead of all creatures; and though never ſo ſhort-ſighted, ſee an end of all created perfection. But alas, commonly we look at the wrong end of the proſpective, or look on the world in a multiplying-glaſs, which repreſents it to our fancy, μέγα τι, ſome great matter, and on the great God in an extenuating, which makes him appear little in our vain imaginations; and ſo we entertain debaſing thoughts of that eternal verity, while we have high conceptions of theſe low and ſublunary vanities. And ſeeing theſe ear-remembrances ſuffice not for our conviction, it's but neceſſary and requiſite God ſhould finde out ſome other way of inſtruction for us, wherein both our ear and eye ſhould receive an impreſſion: And that they who would not learn by the teachings of the Word, ſhould have the voice of the Rod cry to them, which (though leſs articulate) may yet become more ſignificative. And hath not God been a long time teaching us by his Providence, as *Abimelech* did once the men of *Succoth*, by briars and thorns, and reading us a large lecture of the uncertainty of all created beings and comforts? Hath he not with fire and ſword been pleading with all fleſh? by the ſore and dreadful calamity of the peſtilence, been

been uſhering us into diſcipline? Hath he not in his greateſt ſeverity overthrown ſome of us, as he did *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, by a moſt deplorable and lamentable fire, in whoſe aſhes is buried all our glory and hope, and the bliſters whereof will riſe in our faces, when it's flames are both extinguiſht and forgotten? The very mention whereof can be no other than a fire in our bones; and whoever hath the ſpirit of a Chriſtian, cannot but by ſympathy ſuffer, and be offended at ſuch a burning. What Engliſh mans heart ſo ſtony as not to bleed within him, or can his eyes contain from tears, either to have heard or ſeen the metropolis of our Nation, the royal and magnificent City of the Kingdom, once the wonder of the world, and even mirrour of all Chriſtendom; ſo beautiful for ſcituation, numerous in people, famous for riches, ſtrength, beauty and honour, levelled with the duſt, ſo as one ſtone's not left on another, and become a burning pile, an heap of rubbiſh, a place of deſolation, even in a moment? *Quis talia fando temperet à lachrymis?* What ear was ever auditor of ſo awk and direful a knell, as then alarum'd its Inhabitants? What eye ever ſpectator of ſo dreadful and doleful a tragedy as was then acted on that noble theatre?

theatre? Who ever ſaw ſo devouring a fire, or heard of ſuch a diſmal flame, ſo ſudden, violent, univerſal, irreſiſtible, and (to be feared) irrepairable? Surely, what terrour and affrightment, what amuſe and amazement, what horrour, and even conſternation of ſpirit, this rueful ſpectacle ſeized the ſpirits of its beholders withall, is impoſſible to divine and imagine. Poor ſouls, (me-thinks) I ſaw at a diſtance your pale faces, trembling joynts, weakned hands, dedolent hearts, who were in this ſo fatal a blow moſt nearly concerned; me-thinks I hear you crying out to your friends and neighbours, to your Rulers and Governours, as the woman did once to that King, 1 *King.* 6. 27. *Help, O King*, who were all forced to return you that ſorry anſwer, *If the Lord helps not, whence ſhould we help?* Ah what thouſand pities (had Heaven pleaſed to have prevented) to ſee ſo many famous ſtructures, antient and venerable Monuments, learned Libraries, rich goods and treaſures, beautifull Halls and Exchanges, uſefull Churches and Chappels within ſo ſmall a compaſs, turned into a Chaos of confuſion, and heap of utter deſtruction! Ah how lamentable a ſight to ſee ſo many able Citizens impoveriſht, ſo many mean ones quite beggar'd!

how

how hideous an out-cry to hear men complaining, We who had thousands in the morning, had not a penny left to help us by the evening! we who had full tables, could afford plentiful entertainments, rich purses, and large banks, enough for back and belly, for necessity and delight, for us and ours, are now reduced many of us to a morsel of bread, and glad to live on the alms of the charitable; we went out full, but came in empty. Ah how sad to behold so many families ruined and undone, so many dwellings and places, that must never more know their owners and inmates, but have for ever cast them out, leaving them to the wide world, and exposing them, as so many Tenants at will, and that without any warning, to the mercy of the great and soveraign Land-Lord of Heaven and Earth! What true Son of Sion, upon view or tydings of so sad a catastrophe, must not bear a part in the Churches Funeral Elegy over *Jerusalem*, *Lam.* 1. 1. *How doth the City sit solitary, that was full of people? How is she become as a Widow? she that was great among the Nations, and Princess among the Provinces?* And so *cap.* 4. 11. *The Lord hath accomplisht his fury, he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured*

devoured the foundations thereof. Oh that by the brightneſs of theſe flames we could ſee our ſin, that hath long appeared as at noon day, but we would never yet behold by the Sun-light of the word! And that this moſt formidable fire may become to us a flaming beacon, to ſignifie our approaching danger and ruin, unleſs Gods anger be timely quenched by the blood of Chriſt, and tears of repentance. And that amidſt the cold formalities, and freezing devotions in the winter quarter of theſe laſt and perilous times, our cooler ſouls might be heated, and our dying affections (by an holy kind of Anteperiſtaſis) advanced into a diviner flame of holy zeal, in ſeeking the Lord, leſt he makes us as *Admah*, and ſets us as *Zeboim*, and kindles a fire in the Palaces of *Joſeph*, ſo as none ſhall quench it. Oh that we could all learn, from the higheſt to the loweſt, thoſe leſſons, Gods intention is to teach us by ſo ſevere diſpenſations, either for humiliation for what is paſt, or reformation for time to come. And if I miſtake not, the phyſiognomy of this providence (whether it be looked on in the glaſs of a more immediate or more mediate agency) Gods hand appeared moſt remarkably in it, and concurring circumſtances give us plain intimations of its commiſſion, and direction

by

by a ſpecial ſuperintendency from Heaven. And though (like a picture well drawn) it looks wiſhly on every one in the room, yet it ſeems to prefer a particular charge againſt thoſe wickedneſſes of pride, luxury, wantonneſs, ſecurity, earthlineſs, and uncharitableneſs, which have ſo long burnt as fire among us. Ah what haughtineſs, idleneſs, and fulneſs of bread was to be found in our ſtreets? with what pleaſure did we live upon earth? what port and ſtate did we begin to carry? what wantons were we grown, forgetting the God that made us, not attributing to him our power to get wealth, having our hearts liſted up, or like fooliſh children, with *Jeſurun*, ſtanding on our heads, & kicking againſt Heaven, and neglecting the God of our ſalvation, ſacrificing Gods corn, wine, oyl, wooll and flax, to our luſts and lovers, inſtead of our Creatour! Were we not grown like *Sodom* and the Old World, a God-deſpiſing, and a ſelf-pleaſing people? that gave up our ſelves to eating and drinking, buying and ſelling, planting and building, every man looking to his own way and gain; and as for the ſhip of the Church, the intereſt of God and Religion; having caught the fiſh, we laid aſide the net; and ſo we could but ſave our own petty Cabbins, let Gods and

Chriſts

Chriſts cauſe ſink or ſwim, we were become *Gallio's*, not minding theſe things! Oh how did we, that pretended to God, mind little or nothing but the world? How went we, one to his farm, another to his merchandize; our ſhop was become our cloſet, and the Exchange our Church. The Courtier, the Merchant, the Tradeſman, all buſie as ſo many Ants on an Hill to ſcrape together ſo much refined duſt, and lade themſelves with this thick clay: Every one ſetting up his Heaven on Earth, and ſinging a *requiem* to his ſoul in his ſtately houſes, full warehouſes, vaſt incomes, if not unjuſt gains and oppreſſions, looking ſo much to earth, as thoſe that had neither time or mind to look up to Heaven; but if with the Lark, ſoaring to Heaven in pretences of zeal and affection on the Sabbath; with the Worm, groveling on the worlds dung-hill all the week after. Like him in the Poet, (that cried out, *O Cœlum*, with his tongue, when his hand toucht the earth) committing even a ſolliciſm with our hands, and bidding an expreſs practical contradiction to our profeſſions. Ah is it not juſt God, ſhould deny us the world as a creature, which we could not have, but muſt adore as our God? Is it not righteous, that ſhould be taken out of our hands, which inſtead of being

being trodden under our feet, had got up ſo near our hearts? Oh how much better Chriſtians, (for to you alone I now ſpeak) (as for the wicked who grow worſe and worſe, and do more wickedly, Hell fire ſhall ſhortly do that in conſuming them, which this could not do for refining) had it been for you to have caſt your bread on the waters, than to have had it waſted by ſuch a fire? Ah, had you but worn the world as a looſe garment, that you might have put off and on at pleaſure, it would not now have come from you(as your skin from your fleſh) with pain and torture, but eaſe and delight; or as the blood out of your veins, with reluctancy and oppoſition, but as water from a fountain, with freedom and liberty. Theſe pictures, if hung up looſly, would have been taken down with leſs rending, tearing, and noiſe, than they are like to be, if your hearts be faſtened or glewed to them. Oh Sirs, had you minded God and Chriſt, as you did this Mammon of the world, and attended your heavenly trade, as you did your Eaſt-India, Turky, French, Spaniſh, or the reſt, and converſed with God in your cloſets, as you did with your cuſtomers in your ſhops, and your friends and neighbours ſometimes at the Tavern, you had had ſomething in ſuch an

hour

hour to bear up and comfort your ſpirits withall, which I am afraid, many of you now want. Oh that you would in this your day, yet know the things of your peace! And before God riſeth up to Judgement a ſecond time, and the fire of his wrath now ſmothered, breaks out with a ſeven times more, even into a moſt violent and unquenchable flame; Hear the voice of the Rod, and him that hath appointed it: And by all that God hath done, or is doing with you this day, learn thoſe fundamental leſſons, of the vanity and contingency of the creature, and the fulneſs and alſufficiency of the Creator; ſo as to make an utter renunciation of all carnal confidence, and engage your ſouls in a firm and reſolute dependance on God alone. O that this might indeed be a purgatory fire, to refine our ſouls from all that ruſt of carnality, and worldly affection that is ſo grown upon us! Let us not make gain our godlineſs, but count godlineſs our greateſt and only gain. Why ſhould we ſet our hearts on vanity, on a non-entity? who would love or value that which he cannot long keep, but if a fire or plunder comes, is upon the wing, and takes its flight; or give that the chair of ſtate, or upper room of preheminence in his heart, which very ſhortly he muſt part with out

of

of his hands? Can you (Chriſtians) carry your houſes and lands, your biggs and treaſures with you to eternity? will they not all ſhake hands with you at the grave? O then make friends (by employing for God and his honour) to your ſelves of this Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, and uſe the world as if ye uſed it not, remembring the faſhion thereof paſſeth away: And lay up your treaſures not on earth, but Heaven; ſtore up a good foundation againſt the time to come, the top of whoſe building may reach eternity. Mind not ſo much things ſeen and temporal, as thoſe believed and eternal. Make ſure of God as your portion, and chuſe him as your inheritance. Now learn to truſt to, and lean by faith on the arm of an Alſufficient God, while ye experience the broken ſtaff of all created beings and comforts. When the ſtream is dried up, and all your veſſels emptied, have recourſe to that inexhauſtible fountain. Learn the Art of living by faith upon an unchangeable and eternal *Jehovah* under all worldly changes and revolutions: To rejoyce in the Lord, and be glad in the God of your ſalvation, not only when ye ſit under the ſhadow of your own Vines and Fig-trees, but even when they neither bloſſom, nor bring forth fruit. Though your goods be gone, yet ye have not loſt your God; he is not gone,

whoſe alſufficiency is able to make up all your loſſes by plague or fire, and recompence you an hundred-fold, in whom alone (poſſeſſing all things) you may poſſeſs them, while you have nothing. Though your trade be at preſent broken, ye have now a ſeaſonable gale for Heavens more enduring ſubſtance. Though ye may be diſperſed and ſcattered as Vagabonds here and there, having no certain dwelling-place, God will be a little ſanctuary to you; and though your City hath forſaken ye, your God is a Tower yet left, which your ſouls may get upon, and a City of Refuge for you to fly to, and repoſe in with greateſt ſecurity. Though ye have nothing but tents to dwell in, and (with holy *Jacob*) a ſtone for a pillow to lay your head on, God is in this place, and he that never ſlumbers nor ſleeps, watcheth for your ſafety, while his Angels alſo are your life-guard and protection: He is your arm every morning, and your ſalvation in time of trouble. Though all die and leave you, relations, poſſeſſions, yet your God lives, who is ten thouſand times better, and able to make it better to you than all the goods and eſtates in the world. Truſt in the Lord then for ever, in the Lord *Jehovah*, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength. And then, ſhould you fall into the hand of mens violence out of that of Gods vengeance, while the enemies of *Jacob* are your

your hunters, you are ſure of the God of *Jacob* for your help. This conſideration was that holy *David* bore up his reeling ſoul withall under all the reflections of the wickeds proſperity and enmity; *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? my fleſh and heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And in all the weights of his own adverſity, he incouraged himſelf in the Lord his God. And this was the infallible pillar and foundation with which the Church under all her ruins, ſupported her drooping faith, even the eternity of God, *Lam.* 5.19. *Thou, O Lord, remaineſt for ever, thy Throne from generation to generation.* And Reader, it's the hearty option of my ſoul, that thou, and all that read theſe lines, yea all concerned in theſe fatal ſtrokes from the King on the throne, to the beggar on the dung-hill, had the ſame comfort under *Londons* burning, that holy *David* had once on *Ziglags*; even a God to incourage themſelves in, who is, what, and where he was, the ſame God to his for ever and ever, when all perſons, places and creatures, ſhall not be what they once were, or be no more. This incouragement of all them who fear the Lord, is the ſole deſign of this enſuing diſcourſe. The Author intending it no other than an anchor to buoy up our ſinking ſpirits, or crutch, the better to inable to ſtep our limping faith. *A*

word in ſeaſon, is as apples of gold in pictures of ſilver. And he hopes (if you have not already forgotten the hand of God upon you) he might find ſome advantage in this preſent addreſs, our hearts under afflictions being alwaies more pliable, and apt to receive divine ſignatures and impreſſions. In this your helpleſs, and almoſt hopeleſs ſtate the providence of God ſeemed to call to him, as once the men of *Macedonia* to *Paul* in another caſe, come over and help us. And though a ſtranger to moſt of your faces, yet being a fellow-ſufferer with you through the common ſpirit of Chriſtianity, his bowels could not but be inlarged with pity, and his heart inflamed with zeal and piety towards you: And ſeeing no other ſtept before him looked on himſelf as obliged to open to you ſome door of hope in this valley of diſcomfort, and afford you what after-help his poor talent could, to bear your preſent condition; become to you a plank after ſhipwrack, to bring your ſouls to a comfortable ſhore. And if his mite may contribute ought to ſo bleſſed and happy an end, to any of you, or the people of God, he hath his purpoſe, who is,

Your Supplicant at the Throne of Grace, and Servant in the work of the Goſpel,

Novemb. 5. 1666.

F. E.

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ERRATA.

ERRATA.

PAge 1. line 11. for *greedy* read *raviſht*, page 44. line 25. read *ruining*, page 132. line 25. for *no* read *not*.

In the Title over the head of the Pages, for *Godly* read *Godlies*.

THE

THE GODLY PILLAR OF HELP.

PSALM 146. 5.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God —

HAppineſs is a bleſſed word, bigg-bellied with comfort, and full fraught with ſatisfaction; as full of ſweetneſs, as the Breaſt of Milk, the Cane of Sugar, or Comb of Honey; as grateful and refreſhing to the reaſonable ſoul of man, and much more the awakened and enlightened conſcience of a Chriſtian as the fountain is with its water to the thirſty Traveller, or the Sun with its light to the greedy beholder. Felicity is the grand attractive of every appetite, and the common

loadstone of all the desires of the Sons of men. Its *generale votum, universalis supplicatio*, the unanimous vote, and universal request of all mankind. *Who will shew us any good*, is language naturally spoken, and almost worn thread-bare by the mouths of all men, *Psal.* 4. 6. Whatsoever other difference runs in the current of humane opinions, their affections herein are all tuned unisons, and their musick is in consort. As conformity to God in holiness, is the most perfect intendment, so in happiness, is the most desirable attainment of men and Angels? Who is it that would not be happy? or though they affect no good in them, desire not good to them? Though few but disdain holiness in the way, all design happiness in the end. Even the Heathens themselves affected, as well as conceived, a Fools Paradise, a Phanatick Elysium of bliss and happiness, as well as Christians a real. They entertained multiplied opinions about happiness, some placing it in gifts of nature, others of fortune (by them so called) a third sort, of mind: Some in pleasure, some in profits and honours, others in learning, and natural, or acquired endowments; all in some external good, and outward satisfaction. They brake the shell, and we gat the kernel; they ran away with the notion and bare speculation, we are blessed with its actual fruition. For having otherwise learned Christ, we know and believe, This to be eternal life only, to know God in Jesus Christ; and that true happiness is bound up in God alone, the first cause, and last and utmost end, the highest and chiefest good; so tunes that heavenly Chorister, *Psal.* 73. 25. after a descant

on

n all creature-enjoyments, even a differing note om the worlds votaries, *Whom have I in Hea-n but thee? and there is none on Earth that I ſire in compariſon of thee.* And the Church ſe-nds him in this pleaſant ditty, *Lam.* 3. 24. *he Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul, therefore will hope in him. Nunquam bene ſine te, nunquam male um te,* ſaith *Bernard* ſweetly. The gracious ſoul ndes it ſelf never ill in his preſence, never well h his abſence. The Sun of Righteouſneſs makes ay in the ſouls of the Saints, though all the tars of creature-conſolation withdraw their light nd influence; when notwithſtanding the bright-ſt and moſt glorious ſhine of theſe earthly glo-vorms, (under its fatal eclipſe) a perpetual night f darkneſs invelops the ſoul, and covers its whole leavens. Worldly evils may render a carnal han miſerable, but worldly goods can never nake an holy man happy. And as a Saints choiceſt appineſs lies in God in a good day, much more ave they ſenſ'd their felicity to be concerned in im in an evil day; when all other happineſſes ail, and felicities vaniſh and fade, as a gourd of he night, or the morning dew before the corchings of the riſing Sun. When God comes o blow upon our comforts, and by the ireful ooks of his ſeverer providence, to frown on ur ſpirits, neither the friends, nor things of he world, can add one cubit to the ſtature, or ontribute one mite to the meaſure of our bleſſed-eſs; but in the ſaddeſt hour that befalls a Chri-ian, of loſs, croſs, trial and temptation, when he barrel of meal is exhauſted, and the cruſe of oyl ſpent, all ſecondary cauſes are at an end, all

creature-comforts at a poſe and loſs, all worldly relations and fruitions prove dry brooks, and barren wilderneſſes, diſappointing the expecting Traveller, or like ſo many Lotteries, to which a man goes with an head full of hopes, but returns away with an heart full of blanks, utterly void of his expectation, then, and then alone true and ſure conſolation is to be fetched from the experience of God, and acquaintance with him, who is the over and ever-flowing fountain of living waters. And therefore the Prophet here in this *Pſalm*, ſetting before us the vanity and emptineſs of all created helps and ſufficiencies in competition with, and compariſon of the divine fulneſs and alſufficiency, condemns all confidence in the creature to the very Hell; and advances with the higheſt Encomiums, and moſt heavenly Elogies adherence to God, and dependance upon him alone. He dehorts on the one hand from confidence in man, or any arm of fleſh, by Arguments drawn from their infirmity and vanity, the mutability of their tempers, and alſo the fragility, yea mortality of their ſtate. All created things have in them an utter incompetency to adminiſter help to a ſoul under any ſtrait or affliction, being finite and fading. For that muſt be eternal and immutable, that muſt afford ſuccour and relief under all viciſſitudes of providence, all mutations and interchanges of life. To paſs creatures moving in a lower orb, and take Princes elevated to the higheſt ſphear of dignity and excellency here below, the beſt and higheſt of men, yea ſo many repreſentative Gods, the Viceroys and Vicegerents of that infinite and eternal Majeſty

Majeſty of Heaven and Earth, exalted to the pitch of deputed by God, and reputed Deities by men, yet even they are under the ſame predicament of changeable affections and diſpoſitions, and eke of a mortal condition with other men: Though gods while living, they die as men, and (as *Diogenes* once told *Alexander* the great of *Philip* his Father) their aſhes are not diſtinguiſhable from the aſhes of the common ſort; ſo that *Darius's memento te eſſe hominem*, wherewith he commanded his Chamberlain thrice a day to ſound him, will fit them as wel as the common ſort. Men, though never ſo able and potent, oftentimes have neither power, nor yet will to help their expectants, their minds are uncertain, and their opinions unſtable as water; ſo as, with *Reuben*, they cannot excell. Inconſtant they are to their principles, profeſſions, reſolutions, and ſtart aſide upon the leaſt diverſion from their promiſes, purpoſes and intendments like a deceitful Bow. And ſhould they hold even and fixed, either their eſtate or ſtate may admit a change; the wheel now up (as *Bajazet* told him) may ſoon go down. They may fall ſo far from the pinacle of power, and turret of honour, as they may not be able to ſave themſelves, much leſs their adherents and dependants; ſuch is their inconſtancy and uncertainty. How ſoon can God clip the wings of their pomp and bravery, and ſtain the beauty and pride of their glory, ſo as their excellency which reacht up to the Heavens, and toucht the clouds, may become as their own dung? *Job* 20. 6. Their breath may ſoon be upon the wing, and take its flight to eternity, and when they die, all their

thoughts, endeavours, counſels, all their dignity and fame, power and majeſty dies with them, and there's an end of all their perfection. And therefore he concludes this with the Prophets counſel, *to ceaſe from man whoſe breath is in his noſtrils.* And all this he expreſſeth to the life, *verſ.* 3, & 4. *Put not your truſt in Princes, nor in the Son of man in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts periſh.*

But on the other ſide, he highly commends confidence in God, ſhewing their bleſſedneſs that depend on him; they ſhall be ſure never to meet with a diſappointment. Though men die, God ever lives; though they change, he changeth not; *with him is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning.* The eternity of *Iſrael* cannot lye, or repent: He is the great Almighty Jehovah, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength, the immutable Rock of Ages, and ſure dwelling-place of his people throughout all generations: A God who abides ever the ſame, to day, yeſterday, and for evermore the true and ever-living God; righteous in his judgements, faithful in his promiſes, beneficent in his providence, and providential diſpenſations; which is daily exhibited towards all ſorts of perſons calamitous and oppreſſed, ſuſtaining, defending, governing and helping them in a moſt eminent and divine manner; and that not in this particular, or that other age of the world, but for ever, throughout all ages, in former, preſent, and ſucceeding generations. And therefore its both far ſafer and ſweeter to truſt to the Creatour, than to repoſe in any creature; all which the Prophet evidenceth

videnceth in the ſequel of the Pſalm, from *verſ.* 6, to the end. And ſo (to come to a cloſe of his main Propoſition) he poſitively affirmeth to all the world, That though there be nothing but miſery and unhappineſs to be found in the creature, all fulneſs and bleſſedneſs dwells in the ever-living and ever-loving God. In conſideration whereof the Pſalmiſt breaks out by way of Antitheſis into this moſt pathetical acclamation, and peremptorily ſets down this infallible maxim, draws up this moſt comfortable concluſion for faith to live and feed upon, here in the words; *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, &c.*

In which words are obſervable two general parts:

Firſt, A general and indefinite Propoſition, of comfort, *Happy is he that hath Jacob's God for his help*; whoever he be, he is really bleſſed.

Secondly, A more particular Expoſition and Illuſtration; or (if you will) a tacite impoſition of duty, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God. In the former, the comfortable Propoſition, we have ſomething implyed, and ſomething expreſſed. Two things are ſuppoſed, and (being coucht in the bowels of the words) deducible thence by way of Illation or Inference. Firſt, A famous and ſignificant deſcription of God, the God of *Jacob*. Secondly, A tacite aſſertion of the ſufficiency of his power and providence over, or his mercy and goodneſs towards his people. *Their Help.*

Firſt, A deſcription of God, and that firſt in reſpect of his nature, or the verity and reality of his being and exiſtence, He is ſtyled here by way

of elegancy or emphaſis, *the God of Jacob.* Saith *Mollerus*, to diſcern and diſtinguiſh the true God of *Iſrael* from all Heatheniſh Deities, and to explode all fictitious gods and worſhips thereunto. As the true God is the God of *Jacob*, ſo the God of *Jacob* is the only true God. He is God alone, and there is no other beſides him. The gods of the Heathen are all vanity, they have eyes, and ſee not, ears, and hear not, &c. *Pſal.* 115. 5, 6. But our God is in the Heavens, and doth whatſoever he pleaſeth. He alone is he, whom all mercy and good muſt be expected from, and ſo all prayer and ſupplication directed to. To whom ſhould a people ſeek, but unto their God? his prerogative it is to hear prayers, and *to him ſhall all fleſh come.*

Secondly, This Title or Appellation ſerves alſo to deſcribe him in his ſpecial relation to his people. We finde him called by our Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 132. 5. *The Mighty God of Jacob.* He is indeed the God of the whole Earth, but in a peculiar manner the God of *Iſrael*, *Matth.* 15. 31. In *Judah* is he known, his Law goes forth from *Zion*, and his Word proceeds from *Jeruſalem.* The Heathen have not known his Law; and although by thoſe *veſtigia creatoris*, thoſe darker impreſſions made in creation and providence, they can feel after him, and ſo trace his Divine Eſſence, yet they underſtand little of his Law or love. And as in a ſpecial way he hath made himſelf known to his people; ſo he bears a ſingular reſpect to them, and takes a particular care of them. It's obſervable in Scripture, that he ſtiles not himſelf ſo frequently (in his revelations of himſelf to them) *the*

God

od of Heaven and Earth (though that alſo be title full of incouragement) but *the God of Abra-m, Iſaac, and Jacob*; as if he had born ſuch oice good will, and had ſuch a peculiar care r thoſe three men, as to over-look all the world ſides them. So near and intimate relation have ods people to him, as their intereſts are mutual- involved, and twiſted in a reciprocal and co-enant-bond. They are his, he is their portion; eir Beloved is theirs, and they be his: They e called by his Name, the Saints are ſtiled *his oly Ones*, and the Church is termed expreſly, *hriſt*. Yea, he condeſcends to be called by their ame; he aſſumes the name of *Jacob*, *Pſal.* 24. 6. *his is the generation of them that ſeek him, that eek thy face, O Jacob.* And of *Iſrael* too, *Ezra* 10. 2. *et now there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing.* The very name *Jacob* acquired upon his conqueſt, *Gen.* 32. 28. And that the whole Church is de-ominated by, *Pſal.* 31. 3. *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord*— Although he be the God of all by Creation, ll creatures being the works of his hands: yet he is the God and Father of his people in Chriſt; his Father, and their Father, *Joh.* 20. 17. And by way of choice and covenant, *Deut.* 7. 6. *For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, the Lord thy God hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial people to him-ſelf above all people upon the face of the earth.* They are λαὸς περιούσιος, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, a people raiſed and elevated above the ordinary make, and com-mon ſtamp of the reſidue of mankind. There is a mutual ſtipulation between God and them, *Deut.* 26. 17, 18. Thou haſt avoucht the Lord this day to be thy God; and the Lord hath avoucht

Pſa. 100. 3. Act. 17. 26, 27.

Pſa. 50. 5.

avoucht thee this day to be his peculiar people. The mutual Indentures of the Covenant of Grace run thus; *Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God*, Ezek. 36. 18. *Sancti quasi sanciti.* As God hath obliged himself to them in bonds of mercy and loving-kindness, so have they reingaged themselves to him in bonds of duty and allegiance. *Who is this that ingaged his heart to approach unto me?* may be understood of Christ or of true Christians, *Jer.* 30. 21. One shall say I am the Lords; and another shall call himself by the name of *Jacob*; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of *Israel*, a metaphor from volunteers, who enter their names into the common muster-rolls, and engage into a (*Sacramentum militare*) a military Oath, to cleave to their Captain, and faithfully to follow their colours. So indeared an union and communion is between God and his people, as himself describes it under the most near and affectionate relation of Father and child, as appears in that gracious promise he makes to *David* concerning his Son *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.* 17. 13. *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son*; by which interpellation he also treateth *David* himself, Christ, and all the faithfull *Psal.* 89. 26, 27. *He shall cry to me, Thou art my Father; Also I will make him my first-born.* Yea, because a man must forsake Father and Mother, to cleave to the wife of his bosom; he courts his people (though in their widowhood, and so under some seeming disadvantages for respect and affection) with conjugal imbraces; and that not by way of complement, as to what he intends to be

e, but good aſſurance of what he actually was, nd is, and will be for ever, *Iſa.* 54. 8. *For thy Maker is thine husband.* And as he ſaid of that aternal, *Nemo tam Pater quam Cœleſtis*, None ich a Father as our Heavenly Father, *Nemo tam ater, nemo tam pius.* So ſaith our Law of thoſe Nuptial Obligations, *Uxor ſplendet radiis Mariti.* Gods Church and People ſhine with the beams f him, their endeared and ever-loving Husband: And ſo much for the firſt, the deſcription of God, both in this his abſolute and relative conſideration.

Secondly, follows the implicit affirmation of he ſufficiency, or rather agency and efficiency of is Providence, together with the manner of its onveyance to his people. He is their Help, and nd ſo as the God of *Jacob.* Firſt then obſerve, Gods influence and communication to his, he is heir Help, or their Salvation, as the word imports. He is indeed a common help, an help to all, he bears up the Pillars of the Earth, and upholds the reeling World and its Inhabitants from inking and periſhing, *Pſal.* 75. 3. The eyes of all things wait upon him who is the great Almoner, he grand and bountifull Benefactor of Heaven and Earth; all live upon the univerſal Ordinary of his infinite bounty, and are fed at his Providential Table, and none go *triſtes ab illo*, ſad from his preſence, that come to him, and call upon him. He helps the wicked ſometimes againſt the wicked, yea the wicked againſt the godly, when they rebell againſt him, or run away from him: But yet in a peculiar manner he is their help; a Saint hath him by way of propriety his help.

He

He is their help, and their ſhield. *Pſal.* 115. 9, 10, 11. *O Iſrael, truſt thou in the Lord, he is their help, and their ſhield. O houſe of* Aaron *truſt in the Lord. Ye that fear the Lord, truſt in the Lord, he is their help, and their ſhield.* Whether the Church of God in general conſidered, or its particular members, they ſtand obliged to truſt in him, whether they be placed in higher ſphears of excellency, or in a lower Orb of activity; for different degrees as to worldly conditions make no alteration in his paternal Indulgences, and Fatherly diſpenſations. He is ſtyled *the Rock of Iſrael*, 2 Sam. 23. 1. and the *ſtrength of Iſrael*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. *David* ſpeaks ſingularly, and by way of appropriation, *Pſal.* 54. 4. *Behold, God is my helper*, he becomes a ſuitor and ſupplicant to him upon the accompt of his choice of his wayes, *Pſal.* 119. 173. *Let thine hand help me.* God is to his People a ſhade for delight and ſolace, while they ſit under the ſhadow of his wings, and his Banner over them is Love; and a Shield to them for defence, to ward off all blows of affliction, and ſtroaks of Calamity, while under his Feathers their Souls do truſt.

Which point being a neceſſary Preface, and preliminary Introduction to that which follows, as laying a juſt foundation for the Happineſs aſſerted in the Text, I ſhall not paſs without conſideration of, but open what is material therein in a fivefold *Poſtulatum*. Three of which Queries will ſatisfie the Explication thereof, and the two latter fall in its practical improvement and Application.

First,

First, *In what reſpects may God be ſtyled an help his people.*

Secondly, *After what way and manner doth he help them?*

Thirdly, *Upon what accompt, or for what reaſons doth he help them?*

Fourthly, *At what ſpecial times and ſeaſons doth moſt afford his help?*

Fifthly, *Upon what terms and conditions may divine help be expected?*

First, How, or in what regard may God be accounted an Help?

There are four things imply'd in the notion of an Help, all which agree to Gods influence on his People, wherein he appears ſo, and whereby it will be demonſtrated that he is properly their help. Supply of wants and indigencies: ſuccour and relief under burthens and extremities: Aid and aſſiſtance againſt enemies and adverſaries: Redreſs of failures and diſappointments.

First, God is their Help in reſpect of *ſupply* and *proviſion*. Thus the Rich helps the Poor by ſupplying his wants out of his fulneſs; and a man helps his Friend, by taking care to provide for his neceſſities. The Lord thus helps his people. He is not a barren Wilderneſs nor a land of drought or darkneſs to them; but he deals graciouſly with them, and they have enough. *The Lord is the portion of their Inheritance, he maintaineth their lot. The lines are fallen to them in pleaſant places, and they have a goodly heritage.* Upon this accompt he is ſaid to be their Sun, where he is ſaid to be their Shield, *Pſal.* 84. 10. a Sun for

for conſolation, as well as a Shield for protection. We finde the Apoſtle drawing up this Concluſion of Faith from the Promiſe; Heb. 13. 6. *So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord is my Helper.* He ſupplyes all their ſpiritual wants by influence of the Promiſes, and all their temporal by the influences of his Providence. Godlineſs hath the Promiſe, both of this and the next life. *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godlineſs*, the Apoſtle hath it, 2 Pet. 1. 3. He gives both Grace and Glory; gives pardon of ſin, peace of Conſcience, ſenſe of his love, and aſſurance of his favour; the Spirit of adoption, a new heart, and a right ſpirit; holineſs both habitual and actual, in the root and bloſſom. Grace, peace, comfort, quickning, ſtrength, eſtabliſhment, perfection are all his Legacies, freely beſtowed, and gifts abundantly multiplyed on the heads and hearts of his people through Jeſus Chriſt. To the ignorant Soul he communicates ſaving knowledge, to the unbelieving, faith; to the graceleſs, true piety and godlineſs. He ſends light to them which are in darkneſs, life to them which labour under deadneſs, liberty to them which are captive and inſlaved by ſin and Satan. He cloaths the naked ſoul with the honourable robe of juſtification, and enriches the poor Conſcience with the fine Gold of Sanctification. The treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge are his free grant as well as the garments of Salvation. Every good and perfect gift is a ray and emanation from him, the Father of lights, and fountain of life and happineſs. He draws the beautifull features of Grace

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on Souls which naturally are no other than Monſters of deformity and imperfection; and pours in the wine of ſpiritual conſolations into the hearts of ſolitary and diſtreſſed Pilgrims in this valley of tears, ſo as paſſing through the valley of *Baca* they dig up fountains ſtill.. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, he opens Rivers in high places, and Fountains in the midſt of the Valleys*, Iſa. 41. 17, 18. And he feeds the hungry and periſhing with that heavenly and delicious Manna, which is able to nouriſh up their Souls to a bleſſed Eternity. *David* moſt elegantly under the notion of a Paſtor expreſſeth the ſufficiency of divine relief; *Pſal.* 23. 2. *He maketh me lie down in green Paſtures, he leadeth me beſides the ſtill waters.* As a Shepherd, feeds, guides, comforts, and defends his Flock, ſo doth God his People, allowing them a ſufficient *Viaticum*, untill thy come to the Supper of the Lamb, Yea, ſuch is the exuberancy of his goodneſs, as he ſupplys all their wants, *according to the riches of his glory in Chriſt*, Phil. 4. 19. Neither doth he give them only the upper, but as *Caleb* did his Daughter, alſo the nether Springs. As he gives them a double portion, a *Benjamins* Meſs in ſpiritual bleſſings, ſo he is no Niggard to them in temporal conveniencies and accommodations; but while he gives them himſelf for their portion, he gives them theſe for their paſſage. He hath entayled by way of Covenant on them, the Corn, Wine, and Oyl; anoynts their ſteps with Butter and Honey, feeds them with the fineſt of the Wheat, and lets them drink the pureſt blood of the Grape, yea ſatisfies them as

with

with Honey out of the rock. He ſpreads their Tables out of his fulneſs, and overflows their Cups with his goodneſs, and allows them not only for neceſſity, but alſo for delight and ſatisfaction. Thus *Moſes* of old with pureſt ſtrains of eloquence deſcribes his depaſture of *Iſrael*, Deut. 32. 13, 14. His have from him all things plentifully to enjoy, and alwayes *ad ſanitatem*, though not *ad voluntatem*; a competency to ſuſtain their natures, though not a ſuperfluity to maintain their luſts, and pamper their more ſenſual affections. The Lions of the World may ſuffer hunger, but Gods Lambs ſhall want no good thing; inſomuch that *David* dare give it forth for an experience and undoubted Obſervation, *Pſal.* 37. 25. *I never ſaw the righteous forſaken, nor their ſeed begging bread.* The mercies of the Throne are theirs, and no leſs thoſe of the Foot-ſtool, the benedictions of Gods heart, and eke of his hand, their portion. And if God condeſcends ſo low as to feed the Ravens and cloath the Lillies of the Field, how much more will this great *Paterfamilias* of Heaven and Earth take care of his own Family? If he be the Saviour of all men, much more of them that believe. And having right in the promiſe of ſuperadding all things to them while ſeekers of the Kingdom of Heaven, how ſhall they be denyed poſſeſſion? yea having given them Chriſt and himſelf, how ſhall he forbear to give them all things? For all is theirs, ſeeing they are his; and they may cry out with holy *Athanaſius*, *Deus meus & omnia*; our God, and our all. Though having nothing, they poſſeſs all things, ſeeing they poſ-

ſeſs

ſeſs him who poſſeſſeth all things. Such is Gods ſingular care and providence over them, that he bleſſeth their *modicum*, while he curſeth the worldlings abundance; and, while extravagant man diminiſheth, and makes a little of much, the omniprovident God multiplies, and makes much of his peoples little; as appears in *Jacobs* ingenuous acknowledgement, *Geneſ.* 33. 11. of Gods raiſing him even from a ſtaff and a Scrip, a mean, low, and beggerly condition, and enlarging him into two bands. Yea, if further ſupplies be cut off, and recruits fail, he husbands for them the old ſtock, ſo as it ſerves their journey through the Wilderneſs of this World, as he did *Iſraels* in the Deſart, whoſe Cloaths waxed not old on their backs, nor their Shooes on their feet. Nay, when reduced to greateſt ſtraits, ſo as there ſeems no way of eſcape from periſhing rather than want relief, he will work a miracle; of which kind of operation we have many remarkable inſtances upon Record, both in ſacred and civil ſtory; but theſe two may content us to evidence its certainty; even the multiplication of the Widows Oyl to ſo ſtrange a meaſure, as to ſerve not only for the maintenance of her Family, but alſo the payment of her debts, and ſatisfaction of all her Creditors, 2 *King.* 4. 7. and the incredible and miraculous increaſe of an handfull of Meal, and a little Oyl in a Cruſe, beyond their natural vertue, ſo as to become a ſufficient ſtore under ſeveral years famine, 1 *King.* 17. 14. In famine, God redeems his people from death, and when all other Proviſions fail, he can rain down upon their Tents Bread from Heaven, as he did on

Iſrael, no leſs than forty years together. That's the firſt, God helps his people by ſupplying their wants and neceſſities.

Secondly, An help imports defence and protection againſt enemies and aſſailants. Thus a man who becomes a ſecond to another, foiled and worſted by reaſon of his impotency and infirmity, one that ſtands by another againſt his adverſary, to defend his right and cauſe, an Advocate that maintains the ſuit of his Client; a Prince that relieves his oppreſſed ſubjects; auxiliary forces that recruit afreſh a beſieged City, or beaten Army, may be ſtiled helpers to them. And ſuch is God to his choſen. He that is the great *Atlas*, who bears up the Pillars of the Earth, upholds them under all the cruſhings of humane violence, he keepeth the feet of his Saints that they are not moved, 1 *Sam.* 2. 9. This *Moſes* moſt lively expreſſeth in that rapſodical benediction of *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 33. 29. *Happy art thou, O Iſrael: who is like unto thee, O people ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help, and who is the ſword of thy excellency!* a ſword for aſſault, a ſhield and buckler for defence. *Solomon* takes it as an anſwer of his ſolemn prayer, even while he is preferring it, That God will maintain the cauſe of his people at all times, as the matter ſhall require, 1 *King.* 8. 59. Upon this account we finde *David* in this Book of *Pſalms* oft ſolliciting God for help, urging him to preſerve, ſave, defend, and deliver him, *Pſalm* 22. 11. *Pſal.* 70. 1, 5. *Pſal.* 109. 26, &c. And as praying, ſo praiſing him for his help, *Pſal.* 118. 13. *Thou haſt thruſt ſore at me that I might fall; but the Lord helped me.* *Saul* and his Courtiers

Courtiers bore againſt him, but God was a ſure ſtud and pillar to his ſoul, that ſhored him up, and underpropt him againſt all their rage and malice. Upon this account it is that we finde help and refuge in a conjunction, *Pſal.* 46. 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a preſent help in trouble.* And in this ſenſe God is his peoples help upon a more publick, and alſo a more private account.

Firſt, He is the help of his Church in the general, and that two manner of waies. He helps them firſt immediately, without the intervention of ſecond cauſes, *Deut.* 33. 26. *There is none like unto the God of Jeſurun, who rideth upon the Heaven in thy help; and in his excellency on the ſky. The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlaſting Arms; and he ſhall thruſt out the enemy from before thee, and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy them.* God ſometimes goes on foot in the uſe of inſtruments, and way of means, for the ſalvation of his people; but here he comes riding (as it were) on horſe-back in a more ſudden and immediate manner, leaping over the Hills, and skipping over the Mountains. Sometimes he works deliverance, but ſometimes only commands it. *Thou art our King, O God,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *command thou deliverances for Jacob,* Pſal. 44. 4. He unbares his own Arm, he puts on righteouſneſs as a breaſt-plate, and clothes himſelf with zeal as a cloak, and when he ſees that there is no man, and wonders that there is no interceſſor, his Arm brings ſalvation, and his righteouſneſs ſuſtains him; and Iſa. 63. 5. the appearances and outgoings of his providence are ſo ſignal and conſpicuous, as *digitus Dei*, the finger of Heaven appears, and every ſpectator

muſt ſay, *This is the Lords doing*, Hoſ. 1. 7. *I will have mercy on the houſe of Judah, and ſave them by the Lord their God, and will not ſave them by bow, nor by ſword, nor by battel, by horſes, nor by horſe-men.* Gods people many times ſee the ſalvation of men (more of man than of God is viſible in it) but often they behold the ſalvation of God. *Stand ſtill*, ſaith *Moſes* to *Iſrael, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he ſhall ſhew you to day, The Lord ſhall fight for you*, Exod. 14. 13, 14. God now was in the van and head of their Army; *The Lord thy God ſhall go before thee:* Sometimes went in the heart or body of it; *The holy One of Iſrael in the midſt of thee:* And ſometimes in the rear; *The glory of the Lord ſhall be thy rereward*, Iſa. 58. 8. How elegantly doth the Prophet expreſs Gods immediate conduct of them through the red Sea and Wilderneſs, *Iſa.* 63. 12. *Where is he that brought them up out of the Sea with the Shepherd of his flock, that led them by the right hand of Moſes, with his glorious Arm, dividing the water before them, to make himſelf an everlaſting Name?* God can rend the Heavens and come down, and make the Hills tremble, and Mountains flow at his preſence. *The Sea ſaw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back, the Mountains skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs; the Earth trembled at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the God of Jacob; whoſe voice breaks the Oaks of Baſhan, and ſhakes the Cedars of Lebanon.* God can blow on his enemies, and with one ireful frown of his providence, can look them into deſtruction; as with one ſmile of his countenance look his people into ſalvation. This is the Argument of

Aſa's

Asa's prayer to God, when that invincible Hoſt of a thouſand thouſand came out againſt him, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power.* He can ſave by many, by few; nay, without any at all; with means, without means; yea, againſt means can he bring about his peoples help and ſalvation.

Secondly, Mediately, and ſo he helps either by Angelical miniſtration, or by humane aſſiſtances. Firſt, By the Miniſtry of Angels. They are all miniſtring ſpirits unto thoſe who are heirs of ſalvation. Not one ſingle, but all the Angels are the Churches, and every particular members lifeguard, both their ſervitors and ſaviours. They ſhall bear them up in all their waies. Their miniſtration, though ſecret and inviſible, is moſt certain, and powerful to the Church. They ſerve for her enemies offence, and her own defence. When the four Angels were deſtroying, we finde another protecting, *Rev.* 7. 2. An Angel helps *Hezekiah*, by deſtroying *Senacherib*s Army, *Iſa.* 37. 36. When *Herod* ſmote the Chriſtians, an Angel of the Lord takes their part, and ſmites him to the earth, *Act.* 13. *The Angel of the Lord incampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*, Pſal. 34. 7. So that there is no room left for deſtruction to enter. An Angel preſerved *Daniel* in the Lions den, *Dan.* 6. 22. The Angel of the Lord ſtood in the bottom amongſt the myrtle-trees, *Zach.* 1. 8. They grow by the rivers ſide, Sea ſhore, or in the valley, and are plants of a low ſtature. When Gods people are at the loweſt, then are they under the moſt High, his

ſpecial ſafeguard and protection. Gods Angels gave *Jacob* a comfortable meeting, when he was expectant of ſo ſad a greeting from his Brother *Eſau*, *Gen.* 32. When *Elijah* was in his ſolitude, an Angel of the Lord comes to him with an incouraging repaſt and refreſhment, 1 *King.* 19. 5. Satan and his evil Angels may combine the Saints deſtruction, but God and his good Angels take care of their welfare and preſervation. We are oft on a ſudden delivered out of great dangers, not knowing how we came out of them, nor which way deliverance came, which is from no other but their miniſtry over us.

Secondly, By the aſſiſtance of men: And ſo God helps, firſt, by direct and proper means, appointed by him to that end. Thus God raiſed up *Iſrael* Saviours, *Nehem.* 9. 27. He gave them *Moſes* for a deliverer, *Act.* 7. 35. So *Jepthah*, *Sampſon*, *Joſhuah*, *David*, and others. God raiſeth up inſtruments to execute his temporal will and providence. When *Tobias* and *Sanballat* with others diſaffected, conſpired againſt it, God raiſed up *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, who carried on the work of the Temple againſt all oppoſition. Rather than fail of inſtruments, *Cyrus* is Gods Shepherd, who ſhall perform all his pleaſure, *Iſa.* 44. 28.

Secondly, By improbable means, and very improper. God puts ſuch a ſpirit of valour into *Davids* breaſt, as he deſtroies monſtrous *Goliah*, and routs the Army of the *Philiſtines*. He curtails, and new-models *Gideons* Army to three hundred men, and by them overthrows a puiſſant Hoſt. He marſhals the ſtars, and makes them

them in their courſes to fight againſt *Siſera*. The walls of *Jericho* fall down at the ſound of Ramms horns. The *Philiſtines* run at the noiſe on the top of Mulberry-trees, 2 *Sam.* 5. 24. Earthen pitchers are the trumpets which alarum the *Midianites*. The ſtretching out of *Moſes*'s Rod becomes effectual to divide the waters, *Exod.* 14. 16. A very unlikely means to humane apprehenſion. The Hornet drives out the Nations, and the Plague, which one would have thought ſhould have ruined the *Iſraelites*, is made Gods weapon to expel the *Canaanites*, *Hab.* 3. 5. One poor fire-ſhip breaks, and ſcatters in pieces an invincible Armado. As the Fly and the Bee may be *Iſraels* correctors, ſo the Gnat *Adrians* deſtroyer.

Thirdly, By wicked means (or rather wicked men) God makes uſe of bad men to do his people good. *Judas*'s Treaſon is a poiſon, out of which he makes a ſoveraign Treacle for the ſalvation of the world. *Ehud* a left-handed man becomes a Saviour to *Iſrael*, *Judg.* 3. *Gibeonites* become ſerviceable unto his Sanctuary. Troublous times forward the building of his Temple, *Dan.* 9. When no other helper could be found for *Iſrael*, God ſaves them by the hand of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Joaſh*, 1 *King.* 14. 27. A traiterous Letter proves the Treaſons diſcoverer and bewrayer. That wicked men intend evilly, God brings about for good to his Church. What the envious Brethren of *Joſeph* meant for his ruin, God ordered for his riſe and advancement, *Gen.* 50. 20. He makes the wrath of men praiſe him, and the remainder of their violence doth he reſtrain, *Pſal.* 76. 10. The wiſe horſe-man makes uſe of ſo much

much of the horſes metal as ſerves to keep him in his pace, and carry him on his journey, and the remainder he bridleth. The wiſe God uſeth mans violence to his own praiſe.

Fourthly, By contrary and deſtructive means. Clay and Spittle, which (if any thing does) one would think ſhould daub up a mans eyes, and make him that ſees, blind, our Saviour makes uſe of to cauſe the blind man to ſee by. The red Sea, which any one would have imagined ſhould have been the *Iſraelits* grave, became their way and thorow-fare, and by paſſing thorow (which a man would have thought had been the ready way to be drowned) was accompliſht the way of their eſcape and deliverance. The Earth proves the womans midwife, and gives her a ſafe delivery, which in all probability might have ſmothered and ſtifled her conception; and ſwallows up the flood of perſecution, which the Dragon ſpits out of his mouth, which in all likelihood might have ſwallowed her up in a moment, *Rev.* 12. 16. The three children ſhone by the light of that flame, by which (as to all humane expectation) they muſt have been burnt and conſumed, *Dan.* 3. They were indeed ſaved by fire. When Gods people ſeem to run into the mouth of danger, oft times they fall into the lap of deliverance; and while others ſink as a ſtone to the bottom in the waters of affliction, they are born up by the bladders of faith and hope; and as the Prophet *Iſaiah* gloſſes elegantly on *Iſraels* paſſage thorow the vaſt Ocean as a Cauſey, *Iſa.* 63. 14. *They are led thorow the deep as an horſe thorow the wilderneſs, that they ſhould not ſtumble.*

ſtumble. *As a beaſt goeth down in the valley, the Spirit of the Lord cauſeth him to reſt.* That's the firſt, he is an help to his Church on a more publick account.

Secondly, To his people in a more particular relation, and private capacity. And that eſpecially in a threefold regard.

Firſt, Againſt their own home-bred enemies, the luſts and corruptions of their own perfidious hearts. There is a myſterie of iniquity acting in the treacherous heart of man. The beſt of us carry about us an heart deceitful above all things, even deſperately wicked. Our foes are our own houſhold, *velis nolis intra fines tuos inhabitabit Jebuſæus:* we fight againſt ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places. Many deſperate luſts, as unbelief, hypocriſie, pride, &c. uſurp Chriſts Throne and Government: But our good God by the help of grace, and his good hand upon us, inables and aſſiſts us againſt their batteries; ſo that though they combate, they ſhall not conquer; and though turbulent, they ſhall not be prevalent. *Conflictus licet miſerabilis, quia non habet pacem, tamen non damnabilis, quod perficit iniquitatem. Aug.* This conflict may diſturb our tranquility, but hinders the perfecting of iniquity. God aſſiſts us by a proſperous gale of grace, while we are rowing againſt the ſtream of corrupt nature. His wind drives againſt that tyde. Grace caſts ſin down, though it cannot caſt it wholly out. Theſe Monarchs have their dominion taken away, though they live for a ſeaſon. Grace helps againſt the power, at well as the guilt of ſin; and though it doth not hinder *ne ſit*, yet *ne obſit*, and while it

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acts the part of a ſlave, or a Tyrant, yet it cannot of a King. *Iniquities prevail againſt us, but thou ſhalt do them away*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 65. 3. And the Prophet ſeconds him, *Micah* 7. 19. *He will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the Sea.*

Secondly, As againſt the ſtrength of corruption, ſo againſt the onſets and aſſaults of Satan. Thus God aſſiſted *Paul* with a ſufficiency of grace, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9. And Chriſt helped *Peter*, when Satan ſhot a whole broad-ſide of temptations againſt him, he was his bulwark to defend him: when Satan preſſed hard upon him, and beat ſore againſt him, he was his buttreſs to ſupport and uphold him.

Non ignara mali, miſeris ſuccurrere diſco.

Is engliſhed by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 2. 28. *Being tempted himſelf, he is able to ſuccour thoſe that are tempted.* Thus the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, when the evil Angels were muſtering their forces againſt him, the good Angels came and miniſtred to him; while they were endeavouring to deſtroy him, theſe took care to preſerve and comfort him. In an acceptable time God heard him, and in a day of ſalvation he ſuccoured him. So when his Diſciples are purſued by Satan that mighty Nimrod, and beaten ſore upon by temptations to blaſphemy, deſpair, preſumption, or the like, Chriſt becomes their Sanctuary from the rage and perſecution of that infernal blood-hound, and great deſtroyer of ſouls. When Satan ſtood at the right hand of *Joſhua* the High-Prieſt, to interrupt

interrupt him in his Office, the Lord Chriſt comes and rebukes him, and tells him, This is a brand pluckt out of the fire, too hot for the Devil to touch and tamper withall, *Zech.* 3. 2. It's reported of ſome holy men, as *Grynæus*, and others, that the Devil on their death-beds made his appearance to them, and challenged them to a combate, which they readily entertained, only with premiſe of that promiſe to the diſputation: *The ſeed of the woman ſhall break the Serpents head.* There is not ſo much venome in the temptation, as there is balſome in the promiſe. If the ſoul be once arked in Chriſts merits, they are to it as ſo many Cities of Refuge; *vulnera Chriſti ſunt civitates refugii. Bernard.* This Lion may then roar, but he cannot devour; this Serpent may hiſs, but he cannot ſting; this Dragon ſpit, but he cannot bite nor deſtroy. Upon this ſcore doth the Apoſtle not only give us a commendation of Chriſts ability, pity and fidelity, but alſo a ſolemn invitation to come with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace and Mercy, and by our holy and humble Oratory beg help in the time of need. And though it may ſeem ſtrange and improbable, yet Gods people finde it an experimental truth, that they alwaies get ground and advantage, both by corruptions and temptations. Thoſe weeds ſhall not ſpoil the good corn, nor thoſe worms deſtroy the beautiful flowers of grace, though they may be in the field and garden of their ſouls; but the ſight of both ſhall ſerve to humble and quicken them to higher attainments of holineſs. And though Satan ſnarls at, and wrangles with them, he ſhall never trapan them out of their right;

right; but being foiled in the diſpute, their cauſe will be the clearer, and worſted in the trial, their evidence the firmer and ſtronger. In all his winnowings, they loſe no one grain of grace, only the chaff of corruption.

Thirdly, Againſt, or under all the enmity and oppoſition of the world, ſecret or open; of pretended friends, or profeſſed enemies; their power, policy, envy, inſolency, treachery, turbulency, rage and fury. Thus God helpt *Moſes*, ſo that in memory thereof, he baptizeth his child into that very name, *Exod.* 18. 4. *The name of the other was Eliezer* (that is, my God is an help) *for the God of my Father, ſaid he, was my help, and delivered me from the ſword of Pharaoh.* Thus God ſuccoured *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 49. 23, 24, 25 *The Archers* (his Brethren, *Potiphar* and the *Egyptian* Courtiers) *have ſorely grieved him, and ſhot at him, and hated him. But his bow abode in ſtrength, and the arms of his hands were made ſtrong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob* — Thus he promiſeth to help his *Jacob*, *Iſa.* 41. 10. He prohibits him all ſlaviſh fear, *For* (ſaith he) *I will ſtrengthen thee, I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteouſneſs.* Three various expreſſions, to give him manifold aſſurance of divine maintenance under all humane malevolence. Firſt, he promiſes him inward heartning, but if his ſpirits ſhould fail, then he will ſecond him in the conflict; and ſhould he not come off conqueror, yet he ſhall never be overthrown; for at leaſt he will uphold him. Nay, he will not only ſecure him from ſuccumbency, but confer upon him victory; he ſhall not only

only escape breaking and crushing by the mountains, but shall himself thresh them, and of a crawling worm, come off a victorious Prince, *vers.* 14, 15. God will not only help his people against the impostures of their own hearts, and Satans malignancy, but also the worlds violence. His promise runs, *That his arm shall strengthen him; and his hand be established with him. The enemy shall not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him*, Psal. 89. 21, 22. This *David* in his own person found blessed and frequent experience of, while he professeth, (*Psal.* 18.17, 18, 19.) God to be his stay, his deliverer, and lifter up of his head under great dangers, and many enemies. And hope hereof was the ground of Christs triumph, even assurance of his Fathers assistance, *Isa.* 50. 7, 9. *For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded. Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me?* No matter what were his enemies, while God was his friend; or who his accusers, while he was his Advocate. God is a sure hiding-place, an home, an harbour, a refuge, a shield, a protection, a sanctuary, an high Tower to his, yea a strong hold in the time of trouble; and when their City shall be taken, they may betake themselves and fly to him as their impregnable Castle. They are called expressly, *his hidden ones*, Psal. 83. 3. not only in point of worth and excellency, but also for secresie and security. He is to them a shadow from the heat, and a refuge from the storm, *Isa.* 25. 4. And what was said of Christ, is made good to them, *Isa.* 49. 2. *In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.* In the shade of his hand are they preserved

preſerved againſt all the ſcorchings of the hotteſt burning Sun of divine wrath, or humane malice; and their ſouls skreened by their Saviours Righteouſneſs againſt the one, and his fatherly providence from the other. Yea, under the ſhadow of his divine, or thoſe Cherubims wings of ſpecial protection may they (as the chickens do under the wings of the damm on the Kites approach) hide themſelves ſecurely, till the dint of every calamity be over-paſt. As the ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael* tunes melodiouſly, *Pſal.* 57. 1. God is to his people both a pillar of cloud, and of fire, one to refocillate and refreſh them, and the other to preſerve and defend them in their journey to Heaven, through the wilderneſs of this world, (as Travellers are by it againſt wild beaſts) Yea, a wall of fire round about them; a wall, to keep in their perſons, and of fire, to keep out their enemies: And in caſe they be yet ſo deſperate as to venture on them, he yet beares them up on Eagles wings, far above out of their reach, or ſight, *Exod.* 19. 2. His providence is to them an incompaſſing hedge, ſo that if there be not that *Intus* that muſt deſtroy them (as the voice told *Phocas*, when cloſe barred up in his Maſters Palace) they cannot but be ſafe. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them, whoſe heart is perfect towards him*; and what need they fear ſhipwrack (as that Philoſopher once ſaid, when under fears of drowning, he lookt up to Heaven in a bright ſtarry night, and beheld thoſe twinkling luminaries beſpangling and imbroidering that heavenly Canopy over his head) while they have ſo many

eyes

eyes of Providence about them. The Keeper of *Iſrael* is always waking, though Enemies be great and mighty, many and numerous, yea neer at hand, they may ſleep ſweetly and comfortably, as *Alexander* once did when in great danger of an approaching adverſary, becauſe *Parmenio*, his chief and vigilant Captain watched: or rather as *David* did when compaſſed about with an Army of ten thouſands at leaſt in imagination, being then alſo hemmed in and incloſed by divine protection. God is a defence to his Peoples glory againſt all that riſe up againſt them, *Pſal.* 32. 7. What ſweetneſs and ſafety doth holy *David* engage to his own heart in confidence of divine ſafeguard, *Pſal.* 31. 20. *Thou ſhalt hide me in the ſecret of thy preſence from the pride of Man; Thou ſhalt keep them ſecretly in a Pavilion from the ſtrife of tongues.* God is his Peoples *Aſylum* from the heat both of hand and tongue-perſecution by their adverſaries.

Now God helps his People againſt their outward Enemies divers wayes: Either

Firſt, By preparing for them places of receſs, where the Enemy cannot finde them. Thus God ſecured *Elijah* from *Ahabs* fury, when he ſent an Inquiſition after him, throughout the whole Land of *Iſrael*, 1 *King.* 18. 10. He returns with a *Non inventus*, and like one that ſeeks a Needle in a bottle of Hay, beſtowed his labour in vain. Thus the Lord in a perſecuting time hid an hundred of his Prophets by the hand of *Obadiah.* Thus under *Sauls* violent rage againſt innocent *David* (which made him purſue him as a Partridge on the Mountains) God provided places of

of retirement for him, ſometimes in a Cave, ſometimes in a Rock or ſtrong hold, now in the Wilderneſs, now at *Naioth*, and anon in the Land of the *Philiſtines*; erewhile in this, erewhile in that place, ſo as he was kept out of the reach of his rage, and eſcaped the violence of his intended fury and malice againſt him. He was as a man upon the top of an high Mountain, out of the reach of gun-ſhot, or any danger but what might come from Heaven; or as one upon the top of an high Rock in the midſt of the Sea, able to ſing, to triumph, to out-brave, and bid defiance to all the raging ſurges, and tempeſtuous billows, that beat againſt him; to which himſelf alſo alludes, *Pſalm.* 61. 2. *When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock which is higher than I.* Thus God protected *Jeremiah* the Prophet, and *Baruch* the Scribe, *Jerem.* 36. 26. ſo as the Kings Serjeants dare not arreſt him. When *Herod* ſought Chriſts life, and would have become Murderer of him who came to be his Saviour, an Angel of the Lord comes and gives his Parents private intelligence about the Tyrants bloody intentions, and advertiſeth them to go into *Egypt*, which was made his Harbour and Receptacle till he was dead and gone, and ſo he kept out of his Clutches, and eſcaped his barbarous and bloody hands. *Math.* 2. 13. Thus the Woman (a type of the Church) had a priviledg'd place aſſign'd her and prepared of God for her in the Wilderneſs, whether ſhe was to flee, and be fed there a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore dayes, *Revelat.* 12. 6. Thus in the Ten Perſecutions, and the late *Marian* dayes, many

many Professors and Confessors of the Truth lay dormant in Wood-stacks, Hay-stacks, and the like, till the fury of the persecution was over and gone; much like those Primitive Worthies, who were constrained to depart the society of men, and live like beasts in Wildernesses, wandring about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, in Desarts, Mountains, Dens and Caves of the Earth, of whom the World was not worthy. Under the greatest rage and sorest oppressions of the Church by Antichrist and his followers, God alwayes had a few Names reserved, who bowed not the knee to his idolatrous Worships and Inventions.

Secondly, By abating the natural force, and innate violence of destructive evils. As God sometimes alters the course of nature in order to his enemies ruine, makes waters ascend, and lick up the old World, fire descend on *Sodom*, the Earth open her mouth, and swallow up *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, the Earth disclose her blood, and vomit it up, no more covering her slain; so otherwhile in order to his peoples preservation. When *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptian* Host had intangled *Israel* as in a net, so as to avoid them they were forced to take the Red Sea, which as to all humane expectation must have sunk and drowned them, God makes it but a Ferry for them to swim over, or shallow Foord to wade through, and so pass on their Journey to *Canaan*. When *Jonah* was swallowed up of the Whale, whose bowels in all probability would have been his Tombe to inter him, God gives him a Vomit, and makes him disgorge his bait, and instead of

a Grave to bury him, he becomes only his Womb to keep him alive, and deliver him safe on shoar. The three Children who were by *Nebuchadnezzars* decree and order cast into the fiery Furnace, in which none could imagine but they must be burnt to ashes, God makes it a Sun only to refresh and comfort them instead of a flame to consume them. Not one hair of their heads was singged, nor their Garments changed, neither did the smell of the Fire rest upon them. *Dan.* 3. 25. The very hairs of their head were indeed numbred. When *Daniel* by *Darius*'s Commandment was thrown into the bottom of the Den of Lions, whose ravenous and devouring nature one would have thought with their greedy and whetted stomacks, should have opened their gaping mouths wide to receive so welcom a morsel, an Angel muzzles them, that he became not a prey to those masterless Creatures, to which his accusers became their Sacrifice, and crusht between their cruel grinders before they could once open their own mouths for Mercy. These noble Worthies had those Promises fulfilled in the Letter; *When thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shal the flame kindle upon thee*, Isa. 43. 2. *Thou shalt tread upon the Lion and Adder; the young Lion and Dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet.* The Apostles Text hath here its full and clear Comment, *Heb.* 11. 33. *By Faith they stopt the Mouths of Lions, and quenched the violence of Fire.* When Evils and Enemies (like so many Leviathans) rush upon Gods people, he sometimes puts a bridle in their jaws, and an hook in their nostrils, and they become to them

but

but ſo much painted Fire, or as dead Lions that cannot hurt them. God can bridle the natural force of Fire, Seas, Beaſts, or ought that intends hurt to his People.

Thirdly, By preventing and diſappointing the deſigns of wickedneſs againſt them. *The God of my Mercy ſhall prevent me*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 59. 10. by the early Influences of his own Mercy, and timely diſcovery of his Enemies miſchief. God let's not the weapons formed againſt his proſper, but cauſeth the wickedneſs of the wicked to come on their own head, and their violent dealing upon their own pate. And when they themſelves do not, Gods People do eſcape the intended deſtruction. God gives warnings and Items to his, before the World can ſhoot off their murdering pieces againſt them. He either faſtens ſtrong inſtincts and impreſſions of imminent danger, or gives them timely notices and ſignifications, which are as ſo many hands in the way to direct them their paſſage, or way of eſcape. As ſometimes he hides a *Moſes* from *Pharaohs* cruelty by the hand of the Midwives, and ſecures the Spies in peace by the hand of a *Rahab* (*Hebr.* 11. 31, 33.) ſo ſometimes advertiſeth a *David* by *Jonathans* Arrows (which though inarticulately, yet ſpeak ſignificantly his concernment) to make haſte from *Sauls* rage: And *Elijah* by a Meſſenger to flee from *Jezabels* fury, and run for his life, 1 *Sam.*20. 1 *King.*19. Whem *Achitophel* had contrived *Davids* ruine, *Huſhai* gives him Intelligence, 2 *Sam.* 17. 16. When *Haman* had conſpired *Mordecai*'s and the *Jews* total extirpation, and fatal deſtruction, God in his wiſe

Providence ſo ordered the Decree about it, as there was upon a Twelve-months ſpace between it and the Execution, ſo as reſpite was given for flight and evaſion, and alſo for application to the *Perſian* King for its Reverſion; In which ſpace ſuch effectual means was uſed, as the ruine intended againſt the *Jews* light on the head of the Enemy, and *Haman* changed with *Mordecai* his advancement in Court for that on a Gibbet, which he had prepared for him. *Eſth.* 7. *ult.* and *cap.* 8. 15. When *Paul* was apprehended by the *Jews*, and the ſacrificing knife of death putting to his throat, the chief Captains Advent in the Interim occaſions his reſcue and reprieve from their purpoſed Execution. *Act.* 21. 32. And ſo again, when more than forty Blood-hounds waited for his precious life, longing like ſo many Leeches to ſuck out his heart-blood, having bound themſelves in a deſperate and develliſh Oath, or banned themſelves into an Obligation to make him their Sacrifice, his Sifters ſon certifies the *Centurion*, who carries him away by force out of their hands upon the young mans information; ſo that, though in very great danger of his life, he eſcaped ſafe. *Act.* 23. 20. It's ſtoried of *Auſtin*, when at a certain time the *Donatiſts* had conſpired to butcher him in his journey home, Gods Providence directs him a contrary way, and he (who once in a Sermon by the loſs of his matter won a Soul, now) in his travail, by going out of his way ſaved his life. The People of God many times when under fears of ſurprizal, or treading upon the very brink, and precipice of danger, in the way of their duty, have been

ſnatcht out of the mouth of the Lion, and when even turning to deſtruction, have been remanded back with a *Return ye children of men.*

Fourthly, By diverting evil men in their furious executions. As no plot of darkneſs ſo deep, but God gives his people ſome light of it even when the train be laid, and there wants nothing but *Give Fire*: So no reſolution ſo firm or fixed, but he can put a ſtop to it. God can cut off even the Spirit of Lions, and make the heart of an *Egyptian* tremble at the ſhaking of a leaf; diſpirit and diſcourage wicked men in their ungodly enterpriſes, and if not, yet divert, ſo as if their courage and heart holds good and fails not, yet he finds their hands other picking-work. When *Pharaoh* is marching in his full carier, and driving furiouſly againſt Gods *Iſrael*, with a *Sic volo* in his mouth, I will purſue, I will over-take and divide the Spoil, God can take off his Chariot-wheels, and ſo ſmite him in the hinder parts, as he ſhall drive heavily, and be glad to retreat and go back (if he might) as faſt as he came. When *Saul* grows outragious againſt *David*, and was mad of taking him, being ſo earneſt and eager in his purſuit, that he ſolemnly avoucheth, that if he were in the land, he would ſearch for him through all the thouſands of *Judah*, and by ſearch had found him, and compaſſed him round about, got him in a nook, a pound (as it were) and he thought he was cock-ſure of him, comes ſudden news of an Invaſion by the *Philiſtines*, which diſpatch makes him deſiſt his purſuit after a ſingle perſon, and take care about his Land. When proud inſulting *Sennacherib* comes out

againſt *Judah*, full mouth, God ſtops him by the overthrow of an Angel, ſo that he came not into the City, nor ſhot an arrow there, nor came before it with Shields, nor caſt a bank againſt it, but by the way that he came, by the ſame he returned, *Iſa.* 37. 33, 34. God hath all his Peoples enemies, Satan and his Inſtruments, not only in the Chain of a finite Nature, but alſo a powerfull Providence, and can hinder them not only from doing all they would, but all that otherwiſe they could againſt them.

Fifthly, By convincing the Adverſary of his Peoples Integrity, and reconciling them to his People. They that fear the Lord, he hath ſaid, He will make his Enemies to be at peace with them, ſo as they ſhall ſay as the King of *Judah* to the King of *Iſrael*, *I am as thou art, and my Horſes as thy Horſes*; or as *Abraham* to *Lot*, *Let there be no Controverſie between us, becauſe we are brethren.* He can not only divert their hands, but convert their hearts. The hearts of all men are in his hand, and he can turn them as the Rivers of waters. He can enamour thoſe that dwell in *Sodom* with the excellency of the Citizens of *Sion*. He can make a *Balaam* who comes out with an intent to abaſe and curſe his People, break out into higheſt ſtrains of admiration and bleſſing. *How goodly are thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Iſrael! Who can count the duſt of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Iſrael?* It's God's promiſe to his Church, *Iſa.* 45. 14. *Thus ſaith the Lord, The labour of* Egypt, *and Merchandize of* Ethiopia, *and the* Sabeans *ſhall come over to thee, and they ſhall be thine, and they ſhall come after*

after thee, in chains they ſhall come over: And they ſhall fall down to thee, they ſhall make ſupplication to thee, ſaying, Surely God is in thee, and there is none elſe, there is no God. A ſtrange and prodigious reſpect ſhewn to the Church by exterous Nations, and to her Members born there. God can ſo captivate ſinners with the Beauty of the Saints graces, as they, who were their Oppoſers, ſhould now think it their duty to become her Supplicants, and their Perſecutors eſteem it their honour to be not her Penſioners only, but her Priſoners and Captives. The Miracle done on the three Children, extorted an acknowledgement from the Heathen King, of the truth of their God and Worſhip, and changed his minde, *Dan.* 3.28. and *Daniels* deliverance, of his Majeſty and Kingdom: And the Apoſtles Miniſtry and Miracles drew forth the Peoples Confeſſion, *Theſe are the Servants of the living God.* Yea, whole Armies when coming forth in the heat of their rage, have thrown down their weapons at the apprehenſions of the goings forth of the God of the Chriſtians; and as *Iſrael* to *Benjamin*, wept over the necks of thoſe whom they purpoſed to tread upon. So effectual is the ſenſe of Religion, as where it doth not convert, it doth at leaſt reſtrain, and bridles the paſſions, where it reconciles not the affections. It is eaſie, and hath been ordinary with God, to incline the hearts of Enemies, and turn them towards his People. Thus God dealt with *Jacob*, when *Laban* purſu'd him, he did intenerate his heart, *Geneſ.* 31. 29, 42. with *Joſeph*, when his Maſter on the falſe Informations of his Miſtreſs, impriſoned him, he found favour in the

Pſal. 105. 21. eyes of the Keeper of the Priſon. *Geneſ.* 39. 21. And ſo when he was forgotten by *Pharaohs* Butler, and envied by his Brethren, he found great reſpect and honour in the *Egyptian* Court. *Gen.* 41. 40. So *Eſther*, *Mordecai*, and the people of the *Jews*, though ſentenced by a wicked and unrighteous Decree to utter deſtruction, found not only (upon her applications, and the Kings Inquiſition into the Rolls produced, containing the record of his former ſervice) a relaxation of the ſentence, and the one great Preferment, while the other ſure eſtabliſhment; but an Order and Expreſs under the hand of that *Perſian* Monarch for the Temples re-edification. So *Daniel*, when the Princes and Courtiers (who maligned, and ſpleen'd his advancement) turned informers of his Non-addreſſes to the King, and his addreſſes to his God, God works a Miracle for him, rather than they ſhall work him out of favour; And as his Interpretation of dreams gat him his honour, *cap.* 2. 46. ſo theſe ſignal appearances on his behalf kept and retained him it, *cap.* 6. When *Iſrael* had their *Exit* from *Egypt*, God ingratiated them to the *Egyptians*, ſo as they lent them Money, Raiment and Jewels to bear their charges through the Wilderneſs, *Exod.* 12. 35, 36. When they were in their travails, God fenced off all injuries from them; *he ſuffered no man to do them wrong*, Pſal. 105. 14. And in their bondage and thraldom, he made them to be pitied of all that carried them Captives, *Pſal.* 106. 46. God promiſeth well-entreatment to his People by the Enemy in the time of affliction, *Jerem.* 15. 11. *The Lord ſaid, Verily, it ſhall be well with thy remnant, verily I will*

vill cauſe the enemy to entreat thee well in the time f evill, and in the time of affliction. And ſo far oth God make good this his promiſe in all ages, s the Apoſtle draws it up into an adage, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers f that which is good?* God can on a ſudden pour orth a ſpirit of unity and harmony, abate all euds, jealouſies and animoſities, and make men f the ſame mind in an houſe; of ſtones he can aiſe up children to *Abraham*; of a rugged Jaylour e can make a kind Hoſt, the greateſt oppoſer, the hieſeſt Confeſſor. He can either deny power or pportunity, means, or hearts to do his people miſchief. He can either turn their enemies hearts, r weaken their hands.

Sixthly, By turning all the evil intended gainſt his people, to their good and advantage. t's the ſtanding promiſe, *All ſhall work together or good to them who love God*, Rom. 8. 28. And Gods performances are anſwerable to his promiſes. Out of the eater God brings meat, and out of the ſtrong ſweetneſs. The wiſe Phyſician of Heaven makes the pureſt Treacle out of the moſt dangerous poiſon. The ſharpeſt edged ſword of an enemy he anoints with balm, ſo that even while it cuts, it heals, and while he thinks to let out the precious life, he only takes away the corrupt and ſuperfluous blood, and in ſtead of killing the perſon, only cures the impoſtume, *dum pungit, ungit*, as *Bernard* ſpeaks. The hotteſt fires of humane wrath, do but refine the Saint into a more ſpiritual temper; they burn up indeed the droſs and ruſt of corruption, but periſh never a golden grace, but rather make it

ſhine

ſhine with a more radiant luſtre, and though the Sun of perſecution looks upon them, yea the furnace be ſeven times hotter than uſually, yet the trial of their faith comes off with advantage, and is found for praiſe, honour and glory. The deepeſt and higheſt ſwelling waters of mens moſt boiſterous rage, do but ſcour them into the greater whiteneſs of purity and holineſs. The flail of humane violence ſerves only to beat them the cleaner out of their huſk. God is a wiſe Chymiſt, that extracts gold out of the courſeſt metal, and grace a divine limbeck, that makes ſweet waters of the ſowreſt herbs. The oppreſſions of the world conduce to Gods peoples ſpiritual advantage. They do their ſouls good. Their Chains are more beneficial than their Crowns, and their Croſſes more wholeſome (though it's like not ſo toothſome) than their Comforts. As the colliſion of ſtones, occaſions the ſparklings forth of light; ſo the knocks they meet with abroad in the world, the ſhine of their graces, and (as he ſaid) *ſchola crucis, lucis*; they never meet with more light than in the darkeſt dungeons of worldly diſconſolation. They alwaies taſte (when the bitterneſs of mans wrath) alſo the ſweetneſs of Gods love: And alſo to their outward good in the end. As wicked mens violence alwaies determines in their own ruine: In the net they prepare for others, is their own foot taken, and in the very ſame pit they dig for the righteous, do they fall themſelves: So the ſufferings of the Saints alwaies end in their riſe and advantageous recovery: evil ſlaies them not, as it does the wicked; but if God in his wiſe providence indulgeth

dulgeth them not a total immunity and exemption, he grants them at leaſt a ſanctified uſe, and a fair come-off, yea, a glorious iſſue, a clear inſtance whereof we have in *Joſeph*, out of his own mouth, *Gen.* 50. 20. Where ſpeaking in reference to his Brethrens ſale of him, he thus beſpeaks them. As for you, ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive. Their purpoſes of deſtroying his ſingle perſon, were iſſued with the ſalvation of the whole family, if not the whole Land. And likewiſe in *Job*, with whom the Devil made a ſad and black beginning, but God made a fair, a comfortable and bleſſed end. As the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *James* 5. 11. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and ſeen the end of the Lord: That he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* So effectually doth God work all for the good of his people, as he reconciles all the ſeeming contradictions of his providence to his promiſe. Though *Iſaac* was once nigh being no child, yet God makes him the Father of many Nations. *Jacob*'s hard uſage by his Uncle *Laban*, ends in great reſpect and kindneſs, as appears by his profeſſion, and affectionate deſire of his ſtay and company, *Gen.* 30. 27. If a man meets his enemy, will he not ſlay him? and yet God ſo overcomes the heart of *Eſau*, inclines him towards his Brother *Jacob*, as inſtead of killing, he kiſſeth and embraceth him, *Gen.* 33. 4. Such is the power and efficacy of divine operation, as turns foes into friends, oppoſers into familiars, envy into admiration, curſes into bleſſings, malice into benevolence, execrations into applauſe and

and acclamations, wrathful resolutions into kin
salutes, and bland compellations, imprecatio
into apprecations, the utmost indignations co
ceived into the fullest satisfactions, and highe
benedictions: So that if enemies will not com
mend, they shall have no power or will to con
demn; if they will do them no good, they sha
have no heart to do them any hurt. We ma
think all things are against us, as *Jacob* once tol
his Sons (*Gen.* 42. 36.) upon the parting wit
his Son *Benjamin*, but the letting go his Son wa
the only way of saving himself. When *Davi*
seemed neareſt the grave, then was he nigheſt th
Crown. The *Israelites* wilderness (though some
what about) was a direct road and line to *Ca*
naan, whither they were journeying. We bring
oft-times the greateſt evil out of the greateſt good;
such is our corruption; but God brings the
greateſt good out of the greateſt evil; such is
his goodness. Let the Apoſtle conclude this in
his general concluſion of comfort, both as to sin,
and affliction, *Rom.* 8. 31, *If God be for us, who*
can be againſt us? none assuredly, so as to hurt or
prejudice us.

Seventhly, By running, and overturning their
adversaries, making the arrows they shoot at his
people, rebound back on themselves, and their
darts to stick in their own breasts, *Pſal.* 81. 14, 15,
I should soon (saith God) *have subdued their*
enemies, and turned my hand againſt their adver-
saries; The haters of the Lord should have submit-
ted themselves to him. The Pſalmiſt breathes out
their destruction by the spirit of Prophecy
throughout the 83. *Pſalm*, in most elegant me-
taphors

phors of a wheel turning, a fire burning, a ſtorm waſting, all which note the ſuddenneſs and irreſtibleneſs of their deſtruction. Thus God ruined the *Egyptians*, when they purſued *Iſrael*, *Exod.* 14. 7, 28. He deſtroyed *Pharaoh*, *Siſera* and his Hoſt, *Judg.* 5. 21. Swept them away by the River *Kiſhon*, as a beſome ſweeps away the filth of an houſe, or as a ſtream carries away the durt of a City; and *Haman*, who conſpired the Jews fatal deſtruction, *Eſth.* 7. And *Senacherib*, 2 *Chron.* 32. 21. An Angel overturns his Hoſt, and as that was deſtroyed by theſe Sons of God, his perſon was deſtroyed by the Sons of his own loins. Thus God deſtroyed *Herod.* For trampling on the worms of *Jacob*, and ſo on their God, he turns again, and cauſeth worms to eat him up. Thus he deſtroyed *Judas* who betrayed Chriſt, and *Julian* who blaſphemed him, dying with a *viciſti Galilee* in his mouth. God does ſooner or later wound the head of the Dragon, the hoary ſcalp of his enemies, pours out his wrath on the Heathen that devour *Jacob*, and lay waſte his dwelling place. Though they gather themſelves againſt his people, yet they ſhall not eſcape by their iniquity, but he will cut them off in their wickedneſs; when once their ſin be at the full, and having filled up their meaſure, they become ripe for deſtruction. Though their bones be ſcattered as at the graves mouth, yet will he overthrow their Judges in ſtony places, *Pſal.* 141. 6. If they drink of the Cup, which (comparatively) are not worthy, they ſhall not eſcape unpuniſht, but ſhall certainly drink the dreggs thereof, *Jer.* 49. 12. When he hath performed his whole work on

on Mount Sion, he will then punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of *Assyria*, *Isa.* 10. 12. Judgement begins indeed at his house and Sanctuary, but *Jerusalem* does but hand the Cup to the Nations; and when God hath used the wicked as Rods to lash his people, having done with them, he throws them into the fire. *Babylon* is dealt with as she dealt with *Israel*, *Jer.* 51. 6, 49.—And so *Amalek*, *Deut.* 25. *ult.* God will be an enemy to the enemies of his people, and set himself against them who are so mad in running upon their own ruine, as to set themselves against his chosen. None ever fought against Gods interest and prospered, but was in the event worsted, and forced to confess he kickt against the pricks. The house of *David* in *fine* overcomes that of *Saul*, and though their horns be lifted up never so high, he, who is the horn of his peoples salvation, will cut off the horn of the wicked, or by his Carpenters fray them away, *Zech.* 1. 21. And when once they come under the hammer of his Justice, they must expect judgement without mercy, who would shew no mercy. The Psalmist does most elegantly express both the sudden alteration of providence to Gods people, and to their enemies, *Psal.* 138. 7. *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me* (as the Son of man did the children in the furnace) *thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.* An allusion to *Moses* stretching his hand over the Sea, whereby the waters came upon the *Egyptians*, and drowned their Chariots and horse-men. God hath an out-stretched Arm, able to reach those who are out

ut of the reach of his people, and they that ome not within the compaſs of humane Juſtice, et cannot eſcape divine Vengeance. And ſo uch for the third particular.

Fourthly, Here is an help againſt the ſtroke of ommon judgements, and publick calamities, ſo to fence them off from their heads, or at leaſt e evil of them. Thus God helpt *Noah* to an rk, to houſe him in time of the univerſal de-ge: *Lot* to a *Zoar*, to ſecure him in time of publick conflagration. In time of war, he keeps s ſervant *David* from the hurtful ſword, di-ine protection was as a coat of Male to him, r Armour of proof to him, to keep him ſhot-ee and untoucht, *Pſal.* 144. 10. In the time of oiſome Peſtilence, when his infectious Arrows e ſhot forth like lightning, they abide under s ſhadow, and are covered with his feathers, s truth is their ſhield and buckler, himſelf their ck and habitation: ſo that though thouſands ll on the right hand and on the left, yet he ands upright, no evil befalls him, nor no Plague nters his dwellings, *Pſal.* 91. Which promiſe, hough it gives not abſolute aſſurance of the event nd iſſue as to temporal preſervation, yet it offers ir incouragement, and propounds ſure and ſole irection how to eſcape the laſh of the deſtroyer: one ſtanding on ſo ſure a foot, and a fair ground f protection in ſuch a day of general calamity, s Gods people. In time of famine he redeems hem from death, (when he is riding on that ale horſe, he enters not their tents) as in war, from the power of the ſword, *Job* 5. 20. n horrible burnings, when others, (both perſons

and

and places, Cities and Countries, are made firebrands of his wrath, they are *pluckt as brands out of the fire*, Amos 4. 11. In times of great concussion, when the world seems quite off his Axletree, and removed from its basis and foundation, the earth moved from its centre, and the hills carried into the midst of the Sea, the waters roar and are troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; mens hearts fail them for fear, and the powers of Heaven are shaken, and great desolations are made in the earth, they remain *intacti & illesi*, unshaken and immoved, *Psal.* 46. *Luk.* 21. *Etiamsi fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ.*

Now God (under the deluge of judgements) is an help to his people three manner of waies.

First, By removing them out of the reach of them; securing them from their dint and stroke. Sometimes he removes their souls to Heaven, and lodgeth their bodies in the chambers of the grave. He takes his out of a sinful and miserable world before the Judgement commenceth, *Isa.* 57. 1. Thus he took *Josiah* up into the chambers of heavenly glory, before the storm came on *Israels* head. He baild off the arrest his life time, but no sooner is he dead and gone, but issues out her writ of remove out of his sight. Thus God took away *Austin* a little before *Hippo* was sackt, and *Pareus* a little before *Heidelburgh* was destroyed; and *Luther* (according to his own prayer, that he might not live to see the Plagues of God coming on an ungodly world) before the *German* troubles brake forth. God removes his people

people by an *habeas corpus* out of this lower world, and then comes down its execution. And the greateſt ſtorm of outward Judgements, hath no further effect on the godly, than to drive them to their Fathers houſe, or moſt boiſterous wind of calamity, than to blow them home to their deſired Haven. When God had informed *Daniel* of ſuch a time of trouble coming on the world as never was ſince there was a Nation, even under the perſecution by *Antiochus*, he diſmiſſeth him with his *quietus eſt*, *Cap.* 12, 13. Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou ſhalt reſt, and ſtand in the lot in the end of the daies. When Gods peoples race be run, their work done and finiſht, he gives them a diſpenſation for tarrying any longer in the world, or managing their office and duty here below; plucks them off the ſtage, and ſends them to Heaven to reſt from their labours, and receive their reward, prepared for them, and promiſed to them. Sometimes God removes them out of the verge of trouble on earth, *Iſa.* 26. 20. *Come my people, enter into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy doors round about thee, and hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be overpaſt.* God hath chambers of diſtinguiſhing providence, and of gracious preſence, whither he lovingly invites his people as one friend does another diſtant from his own home, and overtaken with a ſtorm, to come in and ſhelter himſelf till it be blown over. God hath hiding-places, places of retirement and repoſe for his people under publick out-goings of his Majeſty, and his wrath and juſtice againſt the inhabitants of the earth. When the world lies

open and naked to the ſtorm of divine vengeance, as a man in rain without a covering, or in a battel without a defence, and feel the ſmart of it, the godly are priviledg'd and protected: when the avenger of blood comes, they have their Sanctuary. They are Gods marked, *Ezek.* 9. His ſealed ones, *Rev.* 7. They are hid in the day of his anger, *Zeph.* 2. 3. Who dare meddle with what God hath marked, or break what he hath ſealed? or who can touch what he hath hid? when the deſtroyer ſmote all the firſt-born of *Egypt*, he paſſed by the doors that were ſprinkled, *Exod.* 12. When God comes to ſweep the Kitchin of the world with the beſome of deſolation, he hath a Parlour of ſpecial providence, or other rooms of retirement to turn his people into, ſo as the overflowing ſcourge ſhall not come nigh them. Though not all, or perhaps many, yet have not ſome of Gods Servants providentially been removed out of the reach of the preſent Plague, and perhaps the late Fire alſo? *Joſephus* reports, that a little before the final deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the godly Jews in the City, in time of the ſiege, heard a voice in the Air, crying, *Ite Pellam*, *Ite Pellam*, a little Village thereby, whither many of them fled, and ſo were preſerved. When the Town be taken, God receives his into Caſtle, which leads to the ſecond way of divine help in common evils.

Secondly, By diſtinguiſhing them in the day of calamity: Sparing their perſons and families in the day of his wrath. If God hides them not from the Judgement, yet he does in it. We have a promiſe of a ſpecialty to be granted,

Mal.

Mal. 3. 16, 17, 18. *A Book of remembrance was written before him for them which feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.* While others were ſentenced to death, their names were regiſtred (*in albo beatorum*) in the book of the living. *And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in that day when I make up my Jewels.* Whatſoever becomes of the lumber and common houſhold-ſtuff, though that be conſumed by the fire of his wrath, God will look to his choicer Treaſure, and keep that ſafe and ſecure. *And I will ſpare them, as a man ſpares his own Son that ſerves him.* Though their ſins deſerve they ſhould be turned-out of doors, as well as others, and expoſed to the wind and weather of common afflictions, yet God hath a covering both for their ſins and ſouls. This is a full Copy of the act of Gods diſcriminating grace in a ſad hour. *For then* (ſaith he) *ſhall ye return, and diſcern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.* Diſtinguiſhing duty is crowned with diſtinguiſhing mercy. In dayes of proſperity, the difference between Gods people, and the men of the world is not ſo diſcernable as to their carriage towards him: they are wanton, ſecure, formal, careleſs and carnal—— but affliction edges them in duty with a greater zeal and earneſtneſs, and is a foil to ſet of their graces with the more orient brightneſs. Neither is Gods ſingular reſpect then ſo obſervable to them: He ſeems to turn them looſe to the wide world, to ſhift for themſelves; but when danger comes, then *Noah* and his family goes into the Ark, then, come my people, enter your chambers

— is Gods usage with them, his language to them. *That ye may know* (saith that Text) *how the Lord puts a difference between the Egyptians and Israel*, Exod. 11. 7. God made a famous and notorious difference between them under all the Plagues inflicted, especially under that of smiting the first-born; and so in that of darkness; thick darkness invelopt them, & spread the face of their horrizon; *but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings*, Exod. 10. 23. To the upright did arise a light in darkness. So God promiseth his people when the hail came down on the field, and the forrest in thickest showers, it should yet be fair in the City; and while sinners were battered down with its force, and shattered with its terrour, *his people should yet dwell in peaceable habitations, sure dwellings, and quiet resting places*, Isa. 32. 18, 19. God exerciseth a special providence over his people. As the Prophet excellently illustrates it by the similitude of the five and the fann, *Amos* 9. 8, 9, 10. And also fitly applies it: *Behold* (saith he) *the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful Kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the Earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord.* He will destroy the rebellious multitude, but yet reserve a select remnant. *For lo I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all Nations, like as Corn is sifted in a sive, yet shall not the least grain fall on the Earth* — Affliction is called Gods five, and fann in Scripture of which there is a different use. The five let out the flower, and retains nothing but the bran; contrariwise, the fann throws out

the chaff, and keeps nothing but the wheat. Though God lets the chaff be blown away, and ſcattered, when by the whirlwind of his wrath he comes to winnow a people, yet he will gather the wheat into his granary; that ſhall be put into his garner, while the chaff is burnt up with unquenchable fire. Nay, ſhould the godly and wicked be put into the ſame five of affliction) (and the metaphor conceived only ſingly) providence will ſo co-operate with it, as even to invert the nature, and change the end of afflictions, ſo as what is to one a curſe, ſhall prove to the other a bleſſing; by what one is much a looſer, the other ſhall become a very great gainer; while the ſinner becomes as chaff, and as dry ſtubble, even as a leaf which the wind ſcatters to and fro, the ſound and ſolid Chriſtian ſhall be as wheat, not one grain of ſubſtantial and ſincere grace, no upright ſound-hearted Chriſtian ſhall periſh in the day of Gods wrath. Take a Saint and a Sinner, and caſt them into the fiery furnace of tribulation, and there will appear (though no ſuch difference in their going in) yet a marvelous wide diſparity in their coming out; even as much as between the three children caſt by the King into the fiery furnace, and their accuſers, and executioners; the one it toucht not, the other it ſlew, *Dan.* 3. 22. Either they come not out at all, or elſe as a ſtone out of the fire, ſparkling with unbelief, impatience, and diſcontents againſt providence, whereas a Saint comes out melted into an holy, humble, ſpiritual, pliable frame, even as pure gold, *Job* 23. 10. There is a ſingular exerciſe of grace diſcoverable by the Saints under

afflictions, and alſo a ſingular action of providence about them; and when God makes the greateſt ſweep, yet there are ſome reſerves, as the Prophet *Amos* lively expreſſeth it in the third chapter of his Prophecy, *verſ.* 12. *As the Shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the Lion two leggs, or a piece of an ear; ſo ſhall the children of Iſrael be taken out that dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed, and in Damaſcus in a Couch.* When the ravenous Wolf or Lion of Judgements hath worried a people, and almoſt torn them aſunder, yet their hunger ſhall be ſo ſatiated, and rage ſtopt, as ſtill there ſhall be ſome remnant undevoured.

Thirdly, By bringing them up out of the affliction, that though they ſuffer by it, they ſhall not be utterly caſt down when they are judged, nor wholly deſtroyed. God brings back the captivity of his people, *Pſal.* 14. and *Pſal.* 126. 1. He may frown, but cauſeth his face to ſhine again. The Sun of mercy may go down in the evening in a cloud, but riſeth in the morning in a very glorious ſhine. It will turn again, and have compaſſion on us —*Micah* 7.19. God may for a while turn his back, but will turn his face in due time toward his people; and though for a moment he forſakes, with everlaſting kindneſs he will remember. *He will not contend for ever, or be always wroth. Heavineſs may indure for a night, but joy comes in the morning, ad momentum iraſcitur ut in æternum delectetur.* While he puniſheth the community, he reſerves a remnant, whom he reſolves to pardon, *Jer.* 50. 20. He promiſes to return the captivity of *Judah*, *Jer.* 31. 42. —

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and *cap.* 33. 26. And like as he brought great evil upon them, ſo to bring all the good he had promiſed. Though brought low, he will raiſe them up again, call back his plagues, if they return from their ſins. As the Prophet emphatically expreſſeth it, *Hoſ.* 6. 1, 2. *For he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up. After two daies will he revive us, in the third day he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his ſight.* An alluſion to our redemption by Chriſt, which is a ſure pledge of all temporal deliverances; as of that they were a type. According to that of the Evangelical Prophet, *Iſa.* 26. 19. Where, having expreſſed by ſignificant metaphors, the Churches travel with its pangs and dolour, and her miſconception (as it were) and miſcarry as to any hopeful productions, he yet cloſes with a comfortable promiſe; *Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe: awake, and ſing ye that dwell in duſt: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead.* Though the Church may ſuffer from, and in the world, yet her ſickneſs ſhall not be to death; though God breaks his people with breach on breach, yet this wiſe Phyſitian will in due time give an healing plaiſter; he will ſet them into joynt again, and then the bone that was broken ſhall be ſtronger than ever: Nay, though they be brought to deaths-door, to the graves mouth, he will command a reſurrection, and breathe on thoſe dry bones, that they ſhall live, *Ezek.* 37. 11, 12.—His providence ſhall be a midwife to uſher in to them a full and glorious deliverance. They ſhall have reſt from the daies of adverſity,

Pſal. 94. 13. They may go into the Fire with others, but when they periſh there, theſe ſhall come out, and be refined Gold, while the major part is conſumed as droſs, *Zech.* 13. 8, 9. *Two parts ſhall be cut off and die, but the third ſhall be left therein.*— They may be proved and tried as Silver, in a very hot Furnace, brought into the Net, affliction laid on their Loyns, ridden on, paſs through Fire and Water, but God will make a way of eſcape, he will bring them out into a wealthy place. They may lie among the Pots, Scullion-like, in a ſooted, ſmeared, forlorn condition, yet ſhall they be *as the wings of a Dove, covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold*, Pſal. 66. 10, 11, 12. Pſal. 68. 13. And ſo much for the ſecond particular imply'd in this notion of help, aſſiſtance and aid againſt all Enemies and Evils.

Thirdly, It imports ſuccour and redreſſe under burdens, or deliverance out of dangers feared, ſtraits and miſeries, injuries, oppreſſions and afflictions felt, Pſal. 20. 1, 2. *The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble, the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the Sanctuary, and ſtrengthen thee out of Sion.* So Pſal. 9 9. *The Lord alſo will be a refuge for the oppreſſed, a refuge in time of trouble.* God is an help, a refuge, a defence and Sanctuary to his people. Thus the Porter helps his partner by lending him a ſhoulder to heave under his Load; one man helps another up, when he be fallen down; *Eccleſ.* 4. 10. We are commanded to help out our Neighbours Oxe or Aſs out of the Ditch, *Deut.* 22. 4. Thus one is ſaid to help another in battel, *Joſh.* 10. 4. 2 *Sam.* 10. 11.

And

And God is on this accompt ſaid to help *Uzziah* againſt the *Philiſtines*, 2 *Chron.* 26. 7. Thus a Friend helps another in diſtreſs, by commiſerating his Caſe, viſiting him, and adminiſtring in Food, Phyſick, or other neceſſaries to his afflicted condition. And thus is God a Helper to his people, and that upon a threefold accompt.

Firſt, Under the (otherwiſe unſupportable) burden of ſin and guilt. This is an heavy burden to a gracious Soul; his Iniquities go over his head, and are a burden too heavy for him to bear. One ſin weighs more than Hell, ſet home upon the Conſcience by the Impreſſions of Gods Spirit; it oppreſſeth it very ſore. The ſenſe hereof made *David* pray with that vigour and earneſtneſs, *Pſal.* 40. 12, 13. *Be pleaſed O Lord to deliver me, O Lord make haſte to help me.* What is the matter? *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, ſo that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.* Like one arreſted upon many actions at once, here one Serjeant, and there another claps hold on him, ſo that the man is put into ſuch a diſtraction, and confounding amaze, that he knows not what to do, nor which way to turn him. This made *Paul* breathe out with ſo much dolour his ταλαίπωρος ἐγώ, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* Juſt like the Malefactor condemned to drowning in *Tiber*, that had a dead body tied to his own living, and ſo was dragged along the ſtreets, and haled into the River: Than which there is no worſe puniſhment. And indeed the weight of ſin is *Onus Angelorum humeris formidandum*, ſuch

as

as Chriſt himſelf (though but imputed) could never have undergone, had not his Humanity been ſupported by the power of his Deity, but muſt have ſunk under the Oppreſſion of it. It was not only *Agnus Dei*, but *Deus qui tollit*— the Lamb of God, but the Lamb who alſo was God, that could bear the ſins of the World. And verily, for a poor diſconſolate ſinner to look upward, and ſee God frowning; downward, and ſee Hell gaping; inward, and ſee Conſcience accuſing; outward, and ſee all Creatures withdrawing; it would ſink his Soul preſently into an Hell of deſpair, if not elevated by the infinite arm of Omnipotency; but Chriſts left hand being under him, and his right hand embracing him, his Motto may be with the Palm-tree's, *Depreſſa refurgo.* The experience of divine help makes *David* triumphantly out-brave all the ſad apprehenſions of guilt, *Pſal.* 49.5. *Wherefore ſhould I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels ſhall compaſſe me about?* Though hemm'd in by his ſins never ſo cloſe, he is able by Faith to hang out to them a Flag of defiance. The Papiſts tell us of their St. *Anthony*, That lying on his death-bed, Satan came to him, and charged upon him all the ſins that ever he had committed, but preſently appears an Angel at his bed-ſide, and tells the Devil, he reckoned without his Hoſt, for *omnia hæc deleta ſunt ſanguine Chriſti*; that all theſe were blotted out by the blood of Chriſt, and ſo he vaniſht immediately. Though this might be a Fiction taken out of their golden Legend, to deceive their Profelytes, I am ſure, it's true as to the Saints and People of God, *Fuſo ſanguine*

ſine

ine culpa, omnium culparum chirographa ſunt de-leta. Auſt. Chriſts blood hath waſht them from the guilt of all their ſins, and therefore they may without ſpot appear before the throne of God with boldneſs: Which makes holy *Paul* cant out his Doxology, *Rom.* 7. 25. *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, and* οὐδὲν κατάκριμα. No one condemnation to them in Chriſt. Yea, to ſing forth a divine *Ennikion*, or *Carmen Victoriale*, and bid a challenge to all the enemies of his ſalvation. *Rom.* 8. 33.— 1 *Cor.* 15. 56.—

Secondly, He helps under weights of Duty and Service. It was Gods Promiſe to *Joſhua*, when he called him out to difficult ſervice, Joſh. 1. 5. *I will be with thee, and never fail nor forſake thee:* And to *Moſes*, when he ſet him upon the dangerous employment of an Embaſſie to *Pharaoh*, that he would certainly be with him, and be a mouth to him, *Exod.* 3. 12. *cap.* 4. 12. God gives forth ſtrange aſſiſtances for extraordinary performances. Gods people know not their ſtrength, till they have tried it, cannot tell what they can do till they come to do it. For Callings and Employments which they never thought themſelves able to manage, he gives another manner of ſpirit, a double portion of his Spirit, when he ſets men over a Congregation, he pours out the gifts and graces of his Spirit on them, ſo as that holy Oyl runs down from their heads to the skirts of their Garments. He makes helpers in Government, and gives gifts to men, that though they have no ſufficiency of themſelves, yet through grace they become able Miniſters and Stewards of his myſteries. Such is divine goodneſs, as he never

never calls any man to ſervice, but he furniſhes him with gifts and Enablements neceſſary thereunto. Yea in ordinary ſervices he comes in as their Aſſiſtant. In Prayer, the Spirit ὑπολαμβάνεται, *Rom.* 8. 26. helps our infirmities, as to the matter, manner and ends of it: The word is very emphatical, and denotes a lifting at the other end of a burden, ſo that what one cannot raiſe, two eaſily lift together. What the Soul cannot do, when never ſo much raiſed by the power of Nature, it can eaſily do, being alleviated and elevated too by the aſſiſtances of Grace. Though without union with Chriſt, it could do nothing, yet, receiving vertue and influence from him, it can do all things, *Hodiè Bernardum Herì Chriſtum; I am able* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *to do all things*, ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι. *Philip.* 4. 12. This made *Paul* ready preſſed to ſervice, that he beggs to become Gods Journey-man, *Act.* 9. 4. *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* God gives not only the *poſſe*, but the *velle* too; works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure. *Gratias ago tibi (Clementiſſime Domine) quod nihil à me requiſiviſti, quod mihi non prius donaſti*, ſaith *Cyprian*. What his will commandeth, his grace *beſtoweth*.

Thirdly, Under the preſſure of ſufferings, whether ſpiritual or temporal for God, or from God, perſonal, domeſtical or publick; God helps his under the burden of all; And that either viſibly, or ſecretly and inviſibly.

Firſt, More openly and viſibly, and that two wayes.

Firſt, *Alleviando*, by mitigating and moderating of them. He gives them at leaſt a little help, as

as he promiſeth the ſufferers under *Antiochus*'s perſecution, *Dan.* 11. 34. grants them ſome deliverance, as he aſſures *Judah* againſt *Shiſhak*: 2 *Chron.* 12. 6. He gives them a Nail in his Tabernacle, and a little reviving, ſome ſhort breathing times, *Lucida intervalla*, Ezra 9. 8. Silence for half an hour, *Revel.* 8. 1. He corrects them but in meaſure, though he leaves them not altogether unpuniſht, *Jerem.* 44. *ult.* He ſmites them not, as he do's his enemies, them that ſmote him, *Iſa.* 27. 7. He lays on his little finger, but not his loyns, he chaſtens with rods, (whips not with Scorpions) and thoſe too the rods of men, of an old man (in the original) who cannot ſtrike any conſiderable ſtroak. He remembers his Peoples frame, and conſiders that they are but duſt, and will not contend for ever, leſt the Spirit ſhould fail before him, which he hath made. *He ſtayes his rough winde in the day of his Eaſt winde*: He regards not what we deſerve, but what we can endure, and never ſo beholds us Sinners, as to forget us Creatures, or deals with us according to the greatneſs of his Power, or exactneſs and ſeverity of his Juſtice, but with abundant mixtures of Mercy and Love. In the midſt of Wrath he remembers Mercy, and never lets out all the Vials of his indignation, and though he forſakes for a moment, with great kindneſs will he gather. *Iſa.* 54. 8.

Secondly, *Liberando*, by Redeeming his *Iſrael* out of all their troubles. Many are the troubles of his Righteous, but the Lord delivers out of them all. He is with them in ſix troubles, and in ſeven no evil toucheth them, *Job* 5. 17. and though

though their troubles be full and perfect, ſo ſhall be their deliverances. If he preſerves them not from trouble, he will ſave them in it, and deliver them by it, yea, out of it. *He that hath delivered, doth deliver, and will deliver*, ſaith the Apoſtle. Satan or the World are not ſo ready to afflict, as he is to redeem or comfort. He delivers *Joſeph* out of the Priſon, *Jeremiah* out of the Dungeon, *Daniel* out of the Lions Den, the Three Children out of the Fire, Peter out of the Goal. He delivers his from reproach, clearing up their innocency as the Sun at Noon-day; from want and beggery, by raiſing them up Families like a Flock; *He raiſeth up the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth up the Beggar from the dunghill, to ſet them among Princes*, 1 Sam. 2. 8. He delivers them from ſickneſs by recovery of them from the bed of their languiſhing; delivers them from oppreſſion, by ſubduing at their foot the Sons of Violence, and giving them (to tread on) the necks of their adverſaries. No temptation befalls them, but he gives a way of eſcape.—

Or ſecondly, more inſenſibly and indiſcernably. He helps them under their ſufferings,

1. By ſupplying them with neceſſary influences of Grace; He cauſeth all Grace to abound in them, Faith, and Patience, Self-denial, Humility, Heavenly-mindedneſs, to have its perfect work; gives them all Graces in their power and efficacy, vigour and activity; makes the ſpirit of Glory to reſt upon them. As they have *doing* ſo *ſuffering* Grace from Heaven. *Philip.* 1. 29. *To you is given not only to believe, but ſuffer*— They have the honour and aſſiſtance too to bleed for Chriſt as well

as

s believe in him, to lay down their necks and ives for him, to offer him their blood, as well as pply his; to give up themſelves dying ſacrifices or him as well as living to him.

2. By aſſiſting them with ſeaſonable ſupports f ſpiritual ſtrength, in their Souls. He ſettleth hem, ſtabliſheth them, ſtrengthneth them. He elps and upholds them too, *Iſa.* 41. that they do not *ſuccumbere*, fall into any ſpiritual *deliquium*. He is a ſtay to them, a Crutch under them, to keep them from falling. They are alwayes ſupported and ſuccoured, when they are not delivered. His grace is ſufficient for them, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. And if any ſpiritual qualms, or fainting fits come upon them, ſo as they deſpair of Life, he raiſeth and reſtores them. Gods people need never, nor would not be ſo afraid of ſufferings as they are, if they knew but their ſtrength. God gives his back to every burden, fits a conſtitution to every bitter potion; bears them up, ſo as they faint not under his chaſtening, but endure (wherein they are happier than by eſcaping). Its all one, may far better to be ſupported under trials, than want the honour of being exerciſed with them. God always ſtands at his peoples back to encourage them, and ſaith to them, as to *Abraham*, *Jacob*, and *Paul*, *Fear not*: As to the Church, *Fear none of the things thou ſhalt ſuffer*. And this divine ſupport is that which hath created even in Women, noble, generous, and maſculine ſpirits; as appears in that heroick Matron the Apoſtle points at in his ſhort Martyrology, *Heb.* 11. 34, 35. *Out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong*, God gives a ſhoulder proportionable to every burden, and fits

fits no Coat of affliction to his Peoples backs, but first he takes a measure or scantling of their spiritual strength.

3. By filling their hearts with abundance of holy joy and comfort. They have strong consolation, and good hope through grace. *Thou hast holpen me, and comforted me*, Psal. 86. *ult.* As their afflictions abound, their consolations superabound: measure heaped, pressed down, and running over. God fills out the generous Wine of Consolation into the hand of suffering Saints: They have heavenly and ravishing Musick, sweet Airs upon the top of the Waters; with the noise of thunder and tumult of waters, there is also the voice of Harpers, Songs in their Pilgrimage. *Rev.* 14.2. The Oyl of spiritual Consolation swims upon the top of the waters of all Earthly discomfort; the lively sense and feeling whereof makes them with the Swan, sing when dying, and with the Nightingale, in the darkest night, when the sharpest Thorn of affliction is at their breast. This we finde evidenced in that sweet singer of *Israel* 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. The consideration of his interest in God and his Covenant made his dying heart to revive, and when expiring his last breath, to leap into the World again, and dismiss it with this comfortable Farewell. The Apostles had experience of this, which made them not only content, patient, thankfull, (blessing a taking as well as a giving God) but cheerfull and joyfull, yea, exulting and triumphant in their sufferings. *Act.* 5. 41. They rejoyced that they καταξιωθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι, were honoured in being dishonoured to suffer for Christs sake. That which to others would

would have been matter of grief, to them became matter of joy; and not only did they joy, but glory in tribulation, καυχώμεθα, *Rom.* 5.2. And ſo the Primitive Chriſtians took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, *Heb.* 10. 34. A ſtrange contradiction to the carriage of the world, whoſe joy is not in a plunder, but rather in the dividing of the ſpoil. And this made the Martyrs requeſt the people not to mourn for them, but rejoyce with them. The joy of the Lord was indeed their ſtrength. In the feeling of preſent miſeries, they rejoyced in the ſight of the approaching reward of glory. This made *Ignatius*, when his body was grinding between the teeth of wild beaſts, to cry out, *Now am I preparing fit manchet for my Lord and Saviour.* This made holy *Philpot*, when thruſt into the Biſhop's Cole-houſe, to ſay, *Now ſhall I be ſcoured, and made fit to ſet on my Fathers high ſhelf in Heaven.* This made Mr. *Glover* call out, when at the ſtake, *He is come, he is come*— Yea ſuch are the ſtreaming comforts of Gods people, in times of ſuffering, as they eſteem them not only their honour and profit, but even their very pleaſure alſo and delight (and ſo there is no head of Arguments wanting to make them comfortable) 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Therefore* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes.* A very Hell of ſorrow with the enjoyment of God, is better than an Heaven of happineſs without him. That's the third notion. An help for reſcues under ſufferings and afflictions.

Fourthly and laſtly, An help for, and accurrence to, and relief and recovery from under diſaſters

and disappointments. Thus *Abraham* helped his Brother *Lot*, when he recovered his person and goods both taken captive. Thus *David* helpt the people when he pursued the *Amalekites* (who had burnt up their City, and taken their wives and goods) and recovered all, 1 *Sam.* 30. 19. Thus a man helps his neighbour, when he furnishes him at an unexpected disappointment, or pressing necessity, as he in the Parable did his friend with the loaves at his need. Thus the Sea-man helps the shipwrackt, when (the ship being split all to pieces, and he floating on the top of the waters, and swiming to save his life) he receives him into his boat, or vessel, and carries him safely to shore. And in this sense is God an help unto his people; *secunda tabula post naufragium*, a plank after shipwrack, when all hope of being saved being gone, he comes in with unexpected relief. And this I conceive the proper notion of the Psalmist here, whose design is to proclaim the sufficiency of Gods help in the deficiency or treachery of all creatures in never so high an orb, of never so powerful an influence here below in this world. And so God is an help to his, both under the failure of expected mercies and comforts, and also under the feeling of unexpected evils.

First, Under the failure of our expectations. When we look for peace, and no good comes; and for healing, and behold nothing but trouble: When our eyes fail, with beholding vanity, and our hearts fail with creature-reliances, then saith *David*, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*, Psal. 73. 26. So

again

again he profeſſeth, *Pſal.* 142. 4, 5. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my ſoul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I ſaid, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the Land of the living.* Though all means failed, he knew God would never forſake him. When the ſtreams were dried up, he goes to the fountain. Do perſons fail, God is an help under their diſappointment, *Pſal.* 27. 20. *When my Father and my Mother forſake me, God will take me up.* Though he were caſt out (as an expoſititious child) to the wide world, God will (as he did for *Moſes*) take care of, and make proviſion for him. God ſaies to his people (as *Peter* once to Chriſt) and performs it infinitely better. *Though all forſake thee, yet will not I, I will die with thee rather than deny thee. Paul* ſaies of himſelf, 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. *At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but all men forſook me.* (All greedy of priviledges, backward to ſufferings for the Goſpel) men are eager to be ring-leaders, when profeſſion is in its flouriſh, but flinch back, and draw the neck out of the collar, when it comes to perſecution: Like ill-made cloth that ſhrinks with the wetting. Notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood with me, and ſtrengthened me — God came near, when man ſtood aloof off, and at the greateſt diſtance. When men, friends and relations, turn the back, and run away from us, then God ſtands at our back, and draws cloſer to us. That's the difference between God and creatures: They in the halcyon daies of proſperity will complement us into an opinion of their reſpect and kindneſs, even as the ſhadow

follows the Sun, ſo do they wait on thoſe to whom they are pretenders — *Donec eris fœlix* — but few are born for a day of adverſity, and will girt themſelves (like the Travelers coat) cloſer, and unite firmer to our intereſt in a day of miſery and infelicity. But God on the other ſide ſeems to neglect his people under their fulneſs of worldly fruitions and ſatisfactions, (they never enjoy leſs of God in the heart, than when they have moſt of the world in their hand) but when afflictions come, then he indulgeth his moſt kind and frequent viſits to them, and beſtows his choiceſt preſents upon them. The world deals with her favourites as *Orpah* with *Naomi*, follows her till hardſhip and difficulty preſents it ſelf, and then with a flattering ſalute, takes her leave of them; but God with his followers, as *Ruth* with her Mother, cleaves and clings to them under all croſſes and changes; follows them not only *uſque ad aras*, but through the water, the fire, through reproaches, plunders, impriſonments, exiles, death it ſelf. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, thou art with me*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Jobs* friends and kinſfolks ſtand aloof off his ſore, his breath was ſtrange to his wife, he was the butt of his friends perſecution; but ſtill his Redeemer ſtayes with him. Though all the company be gone, the Phyſician and Nurſe abide ſtill with the Patient. *David* becomes a reproach to his neighbours, and a fear to his acquaintance; his very look was ſo ghaſtly as frighted them; no ſooner they ſaw him, but they fled from him; they forgat him as a dead man, out of mind he was, as well as ſight. *He looked for ſome to take pity, but there was*

none;

none; *and for comforters, but there was none*; *he was like a Pellican in the wilderneſs, an Owl in the deſart, and a Sparrow on the houſe top*; brought to a ſolitary, forſaken, forlorn condition; yet when all other friends and lovers abſented, his God was ſtill with him, his face ſhined upon him; he heard his poor, and deſpiſed not his priſoner; he looked down on him from the height of his Sanctuary, had reſpect to his groaning, and regard to the prayer of the deſtitute. Whom the world turns off, God commonly receives; whom they caſt out of their company, he entertains in his ever-bleſſed communions, *Iſa.* 66. 5. When ſin ſayes, *Ego inficiam*, I'le defile you, Satan, *ego interficiam*, I'le deſtroy you, the world, *ego deficiam*, I'le fail you, he ſaith, *ego reficiam*, I'le refreſh you. When they know not whither to go, he hath for his the words of eternal life, *Joh.* 6. 68. When creatures prove all like ſo many broken Reeds, not only deceiving, but afflicting him that leans on them; *He is the ſtaff of Jacob, and the hope of Iſrael, upon whom whoſoever lean'd, was never aſhamed.*

Do the things of the world fail? he helps under their diſappointment. All outward things are of a defectible nature, they periſh with the uſing; uncertainty is ſtampt upon the beſt of them, and their faſhion παράγει, deceives and paſſeth away, 1 *Joh.* 2. 17. *But the Word of God indures for ever.* He that ſeeks ſufficiency or ſatisfaction in the world, ſeeks the living amongſt the dead; God never made it for enjoyment, but only for uſe. Such expectations raiſe it beyond its natural vertue, and innate efficacy. And when we

look for more, God may justly let us finde less than it may otherwise afford us. And sometimes God on purpose breaks the staff of creature-comforts, to learn us sole dependance on himself. As is reported of *William* the Conquerour, when he first came over into this our Iland, he burnt all his ships, thereby to render to his souldiers the thoughts of a return desperate. God will have his have no other strings to the bow of their trust, but his majesty and mercy. And as we alwaies finde in the world less than we expected, so in God more, than we could reasonably hope. He makes good to the enjoyer what he promised to the expectant; and is better to his people, not only than their fears, but their desires and hopes. He never leaves his people desolate, though for a time he may make them disconsolate. In all straights he hath a reserve, and exigencies a supply and succour. Under spiritual disappointments, the want of Ordinances, and necessary means of Grace; he can prepare a table in the wilderness. He fed *Israel* with Manna there forty years together. He hath promised to be a little Sanctuary to his people, *Ezek.* 11. 16. for retirement, and also for refreshment. He affords the gracious soul sweet repasts by the manifestations of his presence; as he did *David* when banisht from his inheritance by the Sons of violence. Under outward disappointments, and want of creature-accommodations, he can make a sufficient provision. When *Elijah* is ready to famish, he can make a Raven to undertake his Catership, and when he sits solitary under a Juniper-tree, hand him a collation by an Angel as his Servitor.

And

And a modicum with his bleſſing, is better than the greateſt multiplication without it. *For man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*, Matth. 4. He fills his peoples hearts with food and gladneſs. He can curſe much; while the meat is in ſinners mouths, he can ſend leanneſs into their ſouls, and they may eat, but not have enough, drink, but not be filled, be clothed, but not be warm: So he can bleſs a little; *Daniel*'s pulſe he can render more nouriſhing than the Kings dainties. Though the ſtaff of bread be broken in pieces, yet he can renew it, or at leaſt deal graciouſly with the ſoul, ſo as it ſhall ſay, I have enough. *Nimis avarus animus, cui non ſufficit Deus. Bernard.* The experience of this was that gave the Church ſuch a large feſtival of joy in a faſting-day, *Hab.* 3.17. *Although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the Vines; the labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off in the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.* And as in the want of neceſſary competencies for outward and bodily ſuſtenance; ſo in the loſs of worldly conveniencies, God is his peoples helper. He recompenſeth them an hundred-fold; what they loſe in temporals, they gain in ſpirituals; and when bereaved of all this world can afford, can yet cry out, we have enough, all in our God. Though they be as having nothing, yet they poſſeſs all things, and retain their heirſhip, while they appear to the world to have loſt their Sonſhip — Yea in the utmoſt miſgivings of their ſouls, when not only their enjoyments, but even

their expectancies are thrown over-board, and ſet all on float; their hope periſht from the Lord, yet his compaſſions bear them up, *Lam.* 3. 21. And when with *Jonah*, they apprehend themſelves caſt out of his ſight, yet can they look towards his holy Temple, *Jonah* 2. 4.

Yea ſecondly, As under the fruſtration of expected comforts, ſo under the feeling of unexpected croſſes and afflictions is God their help. God is never far from his people, when trouble is near: When men draw back, he draws moſt near, and miſery advanceth forward; he never goes away and leaves them naked combatants with it. If outward mercies fail, he will give contentation under the want of them, or better mercies inſtead of them; exchanges the gold of Heaven for this earthly droſs: (Though others have the portions, they have with *Iſaac* the Inheritance, and the men of the world gifts, with *Jeboram*, they have the Kingdom, and change of worldly comforts, for the hopes of future glory, and a double portion of the gifts and graces of his Spirit, is no robbery or injury.) Yea he often beſtows better in kind, as well as value; as he gives them himſelf, who is better than many wives, children, eſtates, (for when all theſe die, he yet lives) ſo he raiſeth up other comforts to ſweeten their croſſes: when he takes away one mercy, ſends another in the ſtead. If *David* loſeth his child, which ſurviving had been a ſtanding monument of his ſhame, he ſhall have a *Solomon*, that ſhall be to him a Crown of Glory in his ſtead: So, if outward afflictions approach, he will finde out a way of deliverance, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9.

The

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of all temptations. Troubles ruſh in upon us ſuddenly oftentimes, and we know not which way we come into them, but God makes our way out of them. He opens for us a back-door of eſcape, when there appears of it no humane probability. Many a time did he deliver them; ſaith the Pſalmiſt of *Iſrael*, *Pſal.* 106. 42. *They cried unto the Lord, and he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes.* Under ſoul-conflicts, when they have even concluded their caſe deſperate, God hath come in with his ſalvation. When *Hezekiah* ſaies, *He is cut off, and ſhall never more ſee the Lord in the Land of the Living*, ſo that his ſoul was in great bitterneſs, in love to his ſoul, his God delivers him from the pit of corruption, *Iſa.* 38. 17. When the ſoul is reduced to ſuch extremities, as it knows not what to do, how any longer to hope, but draws up deſperate concluſions againſt mercy, and ſaies, *The Lord will be gracious no more*; he hath in anger ſhut up his tender mercies, I ſhall ſurely fall by the ſtrength of this corruption, that temptation: (As Mris. *Honywood* ſaid) *As ſure as this Glaſs breaks, I ſhall be damned.*) The ſoul lookt for comfort from Ordinances, and Promiſes; expected help from faithful Miniſters, and fellow-Chriſtians, but findes none to ſave, none to comfort; even then he findes out ſome Meſſenger, an Interpreter, one among a thouſand to ſhew to man his uprightneſs; then he is gracious, and delivers him from going down to the pit; he delights in the Almighty, and lifts up his face to God. *Job cap.* 22. and *cap.* 33. And ſo under outward calamities, which come ſo ſuddenly and violently, as

as there ſeems no way of reſcue or reſiſtance, but a man cries out with *David*, *He ſhall, muſt one day fall by the hand of Saul*, by the power of this or the other affliction, yet God delivers out of the mouths of theſe ravening Lions; as he did him, *Pſal.* 31. 22. *I ſaid in mine haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheleſs thou heardſt the voice of my ſupplications when I cried unto thee.* Though he were even at deaths door, at the graves mouth, God brought up his ſoul from the grave, and kept him alive, that he went not down into the pit. *The ſorrows of death compaſſed him, and the pains of Hell got hold upon him, and he ſaid in his haſte, all were lyars*, the Prophet *Samuel*, and all; yet at length God gave him ſuch experience of his ſalvation, as he could not contain, but cries out, *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.* It's Gods uſual method to work by contraries, and as he diſappoints ſinners in the height of their hopes and confidences; ſo he relieves his Saints in the loweſt ebbs of their diffidencies and deſpondencies; he caſts them down when advanced on the higheſt pinnacle of undeſerved, and abuſed mercy, and lifts his own up, when plunged into the moſt deep and intricate labyrinths of affliction and miſery. And that is the laſt particular in this firſt branch of the Propoſition. In what reſpects God is an help to his people.

The ſecond follows: How, or after what ſort and manner he gives them help. Take it briefly in theſe following particulars, which will enhance the excellency of divine help.

Firſt, He helps ſuddenly and unexpectedly, when

when his people little dream of it, leaſt of all look for it, and expect it, *Pſal.* 126. 1. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream. The deliverance was ſo great as it ſeems incredible, too good news to be true. Wicked men build Caſtles in the Air, and dream of more mercy than they finde true; dream they eat, and when they awake, are an hungry. The godly carry a low ſail, and commonly dream of leſs. The world is commonly worſe than its promiſes, God ordinarily better than his word. Sinners meet with leſs, Saints more than they expected. God, with a breath blows the wicked into deſtruction, and with a breath commands his peoples deliverance. Their ruin is ſudden; how does deſolation come upon them in a moment, and they are conſumed with Gods terrours? When *Babylon* is ſo pleaſed with her ſelf, that ſhe courts her ſelf like a Lady, God can make her a Widow. As gliding waters, melting ſnales, untimely births, ſo is their proſperity, and as a ſudden flame, or unlookt for Herricane, comes their miſery, *Pſal.* 58. 9. And no leſs expected are Sions reparations. It's compared to a Creation, *Iſa.* 65. 18. which is ſuddenly effected, a generation, which is *in inſtanti*: Nay, before ſhe travelled, ſhe brought forth, *Iſa.* 66. 7, 8. She is delivered before her time, and without pain, and yet does not miſcarry. Yea, and as her deliverance comes unexpectedly as to time, ſo to means likewiſe, *Micah* 4. 10. *Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O Daughter of Sion, like a woman in travel; Thou ſhalt go even to Babylon, there ſhalt thou be delivered.* An enemy ſhall become her

her Midwife, who ſought to be her murderer. It's but the ſhine of Gods face, and his people are ſaved, *Pſal* 80. *ult.* But the turn of his hand, and his people are delivered, *Zech.*13. He ſaies, *return*, his word can do it as well as his work, *Pſa.*90.3. Judgements come on foot, but mercy on horſe-back, on the wing, skipping over the hills, and leaping over the mountains. No ſooner do Gods people cry to him in prayer, but he eccho's to them in mercy, *Iſa.* 58. 9. *Then ſhalt thou call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer: Thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, here am I.* As Gods people anſwer to his voice commanding, *Speak Lord, thy Servants hear*; ſo he anſwers to their voice petitioning, *Call upon me, and I will anſwer thee*, Jer. 33. 3. He cuts ſhort his work in righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 9. 28.

Secondly, Gradually; though ſalvation comes ſuddenly, yet not *ſimul & ſemel*, all at once is it compleated and perfected. It's compared to light, which creeps upon the Air *pedetentim*, by little and little. The dawning of the day goes before the high noon. God works for his people, πολυμερῶς & πολυτρόπως, after divers waies and manners: by piece-meals and inches, as it were. Sion is not built in a day. God could deſtroy his peoples luſts, and their enemies together, but he ſlaies them not, leſt they ſhould forget. He could at once perfect the building of grace in the ſoul, and work of reformation in his Church, but he chuſeth to let it have its ſtages; firſt laies the foundation, then laies on the ſuperſtructures, and ſo at laſt perfects the fabrick, that ſo he may have the greater tribute and revenue of praiſes and accla-

acclamations coming into his Grace. God is a God that waits to be gracious to his people; but he is alſo a God of Judgement. They ſhall get ground, but yet muſt be fighting; they ſhall have ſupply, yet muſt be waiting. The prudent Father will not give his child his whole portion into his hand at once; nor the diſcreet friend truſt all the ſtock he intends to his friend together, but help them by degrees according to their neceſſities and occaſions; thereby to engage their continual dependance upon them. Leſſer motions are ordinarily quick, but great motions ſlower. God gives the wicked Prodigal all in hand, whom he hath no further thoughts of good will, and purpoſes of grace and love unto; but in reſpect of his people, he does all for eternity; and therefore with the skilfull Artiſts, draws not up his work in haſte, but takes time to make it the more beautiful and admirable. God is the Saviour of his people, and yet ſometimes like the curious Limner, hides his work till the whole draught be compleated, *Iſa.* 45. 15. *Verily thou art a God that hideſt thy ſelf, O God of Iſrael, the Saviour.* He carries on the work in a very hidden and myſterious way, by ſo many ænigma's and riddles of providence, as his foot-ſteps cannot eaſily be traced, nor his handy-work ſearcht out to perfection. There are many hitherto's in his mercies and ſalvations, many *Ebenezers*, 1 *Sam.* 7. 12. *He called the name of it Ebenezer, ſaying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

Thirdly, He helps opportunely and ſeaſonably, in the very preſent emergency, and ſtrait, in the hour, the nick of trouble. Opportunity is the Salt

Salt that ſeaſons any mercy. Now God times all his helps and ſuccours to his people. As he dealt with Chriſt, ſo with them; *In an acceptable time he hears them, and in the day of ſalvation he helps them.* He is θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχάνης, a God at a pinch; *In the Mount will he be ſeen* — when his own arm ſhall be the more conſpicuous; or when his people are in eminent and imminent dangers. When the murdering-knife is putting to *Iſaac*'s throat, he plucks back *Abraham*'s hand. When the Canon is diſcharging againſt the Jews, then he muzzles the mouth of it, *Deut.* 32. 36. *For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his Servants; when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left.* When the ſiege can hold no longer (and there's none left in the fenced Cities, more than in the open Plains) then forthwith comes relief. *This is the day of Jacob's trouble; alas, for that day is great, and there is none like it, but he ſhall be ſaved out of it,* Jer. 30. 7. Daies of great trouble, are daies of glorious ſalvation. When *Iſrael* was in a very great diſtreſs, like to be ſwallowed up by the *Ammonites*, and upon their applications to God he turns them off, with a proteſtation that he would deliver them no more; yet pleading the inſtancy of their oppreſſion, and begging relief in the preſent exigency (*Deliver us only we pray thee this day*) His ſoul was grieved for their miſery, and his pity became ſollicitor to his power in order to their ſuccour and redreſs, *Judg.* 10. 16. When the ſoul like *Jonah*, in the Whales belly, is even ſwallowed up of ſorrow, and out of the depths, the belly of Hell,

Hell, cries to the Lord, *He will hear him.* God hath ſaid, *He will bring his people back from the depths both of Earth and Sea*, Pſal. 68. 22. Pſal. 1. 20. Prayer put up to Heaven by a ſoul ready to ſink in the mire, as being able to finde no ſtanding, is alwaies in an acceptable time: That is *molliſſimum fandi tempus*, Pſal. 69. 13. Gods help is limited to no time, but there are uſually two ſpecial ſeaſons when the fruit of mercy is full ripe, and God plucks it off the tree of providence, and throws it into the laps of his people; either when their enemies condition is high, and they triumphant, or his peoples low, and they deſpondent and deſperate.

Firſt, The influx of divine help is then ſeaſonable under the enemies rage, height and inſolency, when they blaſpheme the God of Heaven, and ſay, *Where is their God become?* There is no help for him in his God; Ah ſo would we have it; God hath forſaken him, perſecute him, and take him; there is none to deliver him; we offend not, they have ſinned againſt the Lord, the habitation of Juſtice, the hope of their Fathers. God then will make no delay, but make haſte for their help: When the malignant Church vaunted it againſt the true (as the debaucht Harlot againſt the chaſte Miſtreſs) ſhe returns her this anſwer, *Micah* 7. 8, 10. *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemy, Though I fall, I ſhall riſe: She that is mine enemy ſhall ſee it, and ſhame ſhall cover her, which ſaid to me, Where is the Lord thy God?*

Secondly, Under the Saints ſuccumbency, when they ſeem to be ſwallowed up quick of the rage of their adverſary; to fall by the power of corruption,

ruption, to be in ſuch an eſtate as they cannot extricate and winde themſelves out by all their policy and induſtry; yea, are ready to conclude, *The Lord hath forſaken them, and there is no hope*; their hope is periſhed, their way hid, and their Judgement paſſed over from their God; it's in vain, and they will wait on the Lord no longer; are ready to leave off, and quite give over praying, waiting, hoping and believing; their ſpirits fail them, and they are ready to put forth their hand to iniquity; their extremity is his opportunity. This is that *David* urgeth, *Pſal.* 70. *ult. I am poor and needy, O God, thou art my help and deliverer.* And ſo the Church, *Pſal.* 44. *ult. Our ſoul is bowed down to the duſt, and our belly cleaves to the Earth*; *Ariſe for our help* — When Gods ſervants know not what to do, *in ipſa hora dabitur*; and when they are expoſed to great injuries and oppreſſions, it repents the Lord becauſe of their groanings, by reaſon of them who oppreſs and vex them, *Judg.* 2. 18. *I have ſeen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and heard their cry by reaſon of their Task-maſters, and I know their ſorrows:* And when their ſighing and crying came up before God by reaſon of their bondage, he thought them meet for deliverance, *Exod.* 2. 24. *cap.* 3. 7, 9. The Rabbins have a proverb, *Cum duplicantur lateres venit Moſes*, when the tale of Bricks was doubled, then comes *Moſes* a deliverer out of *Egypt*. Nothing fetcheth down Judgement from Heaven ſooner than the cry of *Sodoms* ſins, nor mercy, than of Sions ſorrows. God regards the prayers of the deſtitute, hears the groaning of his Turtles, appointed for death,

death, of his priſoners, deſtin'd for deſtruction. Their mourning weeds, furrowed faces, and ſighing, ſobbing hearts are ſilent but potent Orators at the Throne of Heaven for relief and ſuccour. God gives his Enemies a looſe rein for a while, but when they grow extravagant the limits he hath ſet them, he pulls at the Curb; and he layes the rod on his people to laſh them for their ſins, but if once it fetcheth tears from their eyes, and brings them to weeping Croſs, he ſpares further correction, and throws it into the fire.

Fourthly, God helps his People invincibly and irreſiſtibly. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord*, Zach. 4. 6. What is this Mountain before *Zerubbabel?* As he works by an inſuperable grace in the heart, ſo by an omnipotent power in the world. *Thy right hand, O Lor', is become glorious in power*, ſaith *Moſes* in his excellent Canticle, *Exod.* 15. 6. *The right hand of the Lord doth valiantly*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 118. 15. The right hand is commonly the Inſtrument of action, and the ſeat of power. God ſaves by his right hand, *Pſal.* 17. 8. by it he can work, and none ſhall let him, nothing is too hard for him. For if the very weakneſs of God (to ſpeak as to our capacity) be infinitely too much for the ſtrength of man, what is the ſtrength of God to the weakneſs of men? *He is wonderful in counſel, and mighty in working*, Jer. 32. 17, 19. He hath power to help, and power to caſt down, as the Man of God tells *Amaziah*, 2 Chron. 25. 8. The arm of Creatures is but an Arm of fleſh, as *Hezekiah* tells the People to encourage them againſt *Rabſhaketh*'s revilings, 2 *Chron.* 32. 8. *With*

him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battels. So able is God to help, that he can do the work alone, though there be none else to help. He is the Lord alone, and besides him is there no Saviour, and he can save alone, without any use of Instruments and second Causes. As *Jehosophat* tells the People, 2 *Chron.* 20. 17. *Ye need not fight in this battel, the Lord your God fighteth for you.* And so he did, by making their Enemies their own destroyers, while his People went out with Songs instead of Weapons, and struck not a stroke, only sang a Psalm of Thanksgiving, they became each others Butchers, and Executioners, *Vers.* 22, 23. And so it was in *Midian*'s destruction, *Gideon* and his Souldiers, go out with Lamps and Pitchers, instead of Military Engines, and not a Sword drawn, or Drum beaten, only a shout given, and the Lord sets every mans Sword against his fellow throughout the whole Host. *Judg.* 7. 22. Here was the Finger of God evidently manifested for his People against their Enemies, in making them spend their Arrows one on another. So dealt God also with the *Egyptians*, that they confessed the Lord fought against them for *Israel*, Exod. 14. 25. Here was the immediate hand of Heaven. Gods Providence can easily discover, divert, or discomfit his Enemies, making their own fears their snare, as he did the *Syrians*, 2 *King.* 7. 6. Yea, such is Gods Omnipotency, that though there be never so many letts and hinderances, resistances and oppositions, he can leap over all. If he hath none to help, there shall be none shall hinder. If he cannot finde his way, (with

(with *Hannibal*) he will make it; he can make every hill a Plain. Notwithſtanding all impediments he can work his intentions, and accompliſh his Purpoſes both in the World, and in the Heart. Though violent temptations aſſail, and ſtrong corruptions oppoſe, ſo as the Sons of *Zerviah* ſeem to be too hard for the Soul, grace can triumph over all difficulties and diſcouragements, and level all towring thoughts, and ſoaring imaginations, and bring it into the obedience of the juſt. There is no difficulty to omnipotency. He can cauſe the work of his Temple to go on in troublous times, and give the great things of Righteouſneſs and Reformation which have met with nothing but a miſcarrying Womb, and dry Breaſts, ſtrength to conceive, and alſo to bring forth. And the deſigns of Enemies he can make all abortive. The wiſeſt Counſellor againſt his Church he can make his own Executioner, and cauſe him to exchange his badge of honour for an ignominious Halter, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23. Though *Gebal*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek* conſpire, he can blow on their Confederacies by the breath of his noſtri's. *Antichriſt* who lets, he can remove out of the way, and make the little Horn puſh the Nations, and the intereſt of the Lamb break in pieces the Kingdom of the Beaſt, though his followers be even innumerable. Hence it's worthy our obſervation, that he chooſeth to appear for his People in a very low condition, (*Pſal.* 136. 23.) that ſo *aliquid divini* might appear in all his Manifeſtations. He overlooks his People, when erect as the Palm, or ſpreading forth themſelves as the green Bay-tree, and looks upon them,

when like the Myrtle they dwell in a low place. Such is the power of his Providence in his operations for his Servants, as in Scripture-phraſe it obtains the name of a Reſurrection, to the performance whereof is requiſite no leſs than an infinite and omnipotent Arm, *Ezek.* 37. when they are as dry bones, and ſcattered, he can command a re-entrance of the ſpirit, a return of life: To which metaphor *David* alludes in his Prayer and Invocation for help, *Pſal.* 141. 7, 8. *Our bones are ſcattered at the graves mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth Wood upon the earth. But mine eyes are to thee, O God, the Lord: in thee is my truſt, leave not my ſoul deſtitute.*

Fifthly: He helps them proportionably. Divine wiſdom diſpenſeth Mercy by an even ballance unto its receivers, by a juſt proportion, and that fourfold: To His Peoples *wants*, *deſires*, *hopes* and *expectations*, and their *good improvements.*

Firſt, To their Wants and Neceſſities. Gods ſupply ever reſpects mans indigency. The worlds rule is, *Habenti dabitur.* The Rich have many Friends: The more men have, the more they would, and ſhall have. *But this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.* He is an helper of the Fatherleſs, *Pſal.* 10. 14. and ſo its ſaid of Chriſt, *Pſal.* 72. 12, 13. *He ſhall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor alſo, and him that hath no helper,*— Poor Orphans, who are too commonly the Objects of the Worlds oppreſſion, are the Objects of Gods and Chriſts compaſſion and commiſeration. It was *Job*'s teſtimony of his integrity, that he *delivered the poor that cried, the fatherleſs,*

and

and him that had none to help him, Job 29. 12. cap. 31. 21. and its a Rule of Equity obſerved in Heaven: Gods relief loves to lift up thoſe whom the ſenſe of their own wants hath caſt down. Neceſſity hath a loud voice, and prevailing with the Almighty. Mans miſery, it's *anſa divinæ miſericordiæ*. God pours the Oyl and Wine of Conſolation into broken hearts, wounded ſpirits. Drooping and dejected hearts may moſt confidently expect health from the light of this Heavenly Phyſitians countenance. The World leaves us, when we moſt want it, and Creatures forſake us, when we have moſt need, but then God ſtands by us. When the hour of ſickneſs comes, he alwayes gives his people the ſweeteſt Viſits of Love. Men commonly take the ſtrongeſt, but God, the weakeſt ſide. What is ſaid of Earthly Monarchs, is much more true of him the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the only Potentate, *Parcit ſubjectis, debellat ſuperbos*. He pulls down the mighty from their ſeat, and exalts them of low degree. He fills the hungry, but ſends the rich empty away.

Secondly, To their Prayers and Requeſts. Asking is the readyeſt way of having. This depends on the former, (for *Oratio ſine malis quaſi Avis ſine alis*. He that wants not, beggs not, or at leaſt ought not ſo to do.) But now true ſeekers are alwayes good ſpeeders. The moſt ſturdy Beggars go away with Heavens Alms, and the eagerly ſolliciting Favourites come away with grants from the Throne of Mercy. The Apoſtle plainly inſinuates, that an holy παῤῥησία at the Throne of Grace, a bold ſuit there is the ſureſt way of

obtaining grace to help in time of need, *Heb.* 4. *ult. Qui timide rogat docet negare*: A cold ſuit do's but make way for the ſtronger denyal; but an holy (*παῤῥησία*) importunity God cannot, will not reſiſt, *Luk.* 18. *Pſal.* 107. 13. *They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he ſaved them out of all their diſtreſſes.* He that beſieges and beleaguers Heaven with his Prayers, ſhall have what it can afford him. The Kingdom of Heaven delights to ſuffer this holy Violence. Let *Moſes* hold down his hands and *Amalek* prevails, let him lift them up, and *Iſrael* prevails. When *Jehoſophat* and all the people of *Judah* were in a great ſtrait, they ſent up their united voices in one general ſhout to heaven, to ask help of the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 20. 4. And he urgeth God with his Promiſe in prayer, which was, when evil came upon them, as the Sword, Judgement, Peſtilence, or Famine, if they cried to him in their affliction, he would hear, and help. God commonly gives help as an anſwer, and return of Prayer. Prayer enlargeth and expatiateth the Soul, deſire ſtretcheth it out for the receiving larger meaſures of Mercy; and it provokes God alſo to beſtow them. Obſerve, what God promiſeth *Jeremiah* as to deliverance from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, *Jer.* 29. 12, 13. *Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall goe and pray unto me, and I will hearken to you. And ye ſhall ſeek me, and finde me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.* By Prayer, that *Legio Fulminatrix*, that band of Chriſtian Souldiers, obtained a refreſhing ſhower, when their enemies were broken with a dreadfull ſtorm.

Thirdly, To their Hopes and expectancies. God loves

loves to give his People an expected end. *According to thy Faith be it to thee*, was our Saviours uſual welcom to all comers to him. Mercy commonly comes on the wing of Faith. *Oleum miſericordiæ* (ſaith *Bernard*) *non infunditur niſi in vaſa fiduciæ.* The Veſſel of Faith is that receives the precious Liquor of Mercy. Faith is the Bucket that draws the waters of life out of the well of Salvation. Faith was that gave *Abijah* victory over *Jeroboam*, 2 Chron. 13. 18. *Thus the children of Iſrael were brought under at that time, and the Children of Judah prevailed, becauſe they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers.* The ſtay and ſtrength of all ſtates as well as Perſons, and aſſurance of all Victories, depends on their truſt and confidence in the Lord. Faith is a wonder-working grace: What was the Inſtrument of all thoſe heroick actions done by the Patriarchs, and primitive Worthies, but Faith? *Through Faith they ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs; obtained Promiſes*, Heb. 11. 23. Faith overcomes luſt within, and the World without. It's a Shield againſt, and a Sword to all our adverſaries; it layes hold on divine help, engageth Almightineſs, extorts mercy from Heaven. *Cœlum tundimus, preces fundimus, miſericordiam extorquemus*, quoth *Tertullian*. Faith removes mountains, of pride within, and power without. It's an invincible grace, and no wonder, becauſe the only receiving grace, and makes uſe of whatſoever is in God for the ſupply of a poor Creature: and *Quanto vas fidei capacius afferimus* (ſaith the Father) *tanto majus gratiæ inundantis exhaurimus.* The larger the Bucket, the fuller the Veſſel, the

larger the Net, the greater the Draught. But now Infidelity cuts ſhort, and withers the arm of Mercy, as Faith unbares it. They that believe in the Lord ſhall proſper, 2 *Chron.* 20. 20. But if ye will not believe, ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed. *Iſa.* 7. 9. Unbelief prevailing, no help againſt luſts at home. *O faithleſs generation*, ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples, when they could not caſt out the evil Spirit, there lay the reaſon of their impotency, unbelief hinders Chriſts own miracles, he could not do many things there, becauſe of their unbelief. *O Auguſtine, In te ſtas & non ſtas*, was language to *Auſtin*, when he could not overcome his beloved corruption: Nor yet againſt Enemies abroad. Alas, Infidelity opens a backdoore for *Syria*'s eſcape, 2 Chron. 16. 7. *Becauſe thou haſt relyed on the King of* Syria, *and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the Hoſt of the King of* Syria *eſcaped out of thine hand.* Want of due and noble exerciſes of Faith on God in the day of Proſperity, provokes God often to leave his own People in the day of Adverſity. God loves to be truſted by his People, their Faith honours him. He that comes to him for mercy, muſt believe his being, and his plentifull remunerations, and an Unbeliever muſt expect to receive nothing at the hand of the Lord.

Fourthly, To their right uſe and improvement, or worthy carriage and deportment. They who do beſt ſhall have beſt with God, and that moſt endeavour to help forward his glory, he will moſt influence them with comfort. *Utenti dabitur. Dii munera laboribus* — *Truly God is good to Iſrael. Walk before me*, ſaith God to *Abraham*, *and*

and be perfect, and I will be thy Shield and Buckler, and thy exceeding great reward. Let God have much of the fruit of our obedience, and we may expect much of the light of his Countenance. Ordinarily, the more Ships we ſend out laden with duty, the larger returns we finde of Mercy. The more Service we do to our great and Soveraign Lord, the more we have of Priviledge. The end of all deliverance is ſervice in holineſs and righteouſneſs, and the end of righteouſneſs is peace and aſſurance for ever; the fruit thereof is ſown in peace, and ſuch as the ſeed-time is, ſuch is the harveſt. Sin clips the wings of Mercy. God will never beſtow his Corn and Wine on them who beſtow it on themſelves and their luſts, nor truſt his mercies in their hands, who make them weapons to fight againſt him. His ſalvation is nigh them that fear him, and his bleſſing upon his people; but he will not take the ungodly by the hand, or help the evil doers, *Job* 8 20. Sin ſeparates God, and a Soul, divorceth him and a People; an unthankfull or unfruitfull return of his Influences wholly ſhuts them up. No long ſhinings of his favour, where no reflections of our gratitude; no allegiance no protection, but a caſting out of the lines of the communication of his grace. While we do well and be obedient, we ſhall eat the good of the Land, but if rebellious, we ſhall be devoured with the Sword. If faithfull Servants, he will become our gracious and affectionate Saviour, but if undutifull Sons, he will be our Judge and Corrector. *Iſa.* 63. 9, 10. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: In his love, and in his*

pity

pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the daies of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. His promiſes of aſſiſtance to preſence with his People are conditional, and ſo are his performances, *Dum ſe bene geſſerint.* As the Seer told King *Aſa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you, but if ye forſake him, he will forſake you. And ſo much for the ſecond particular, how God helps his People.

Thirdly, What are the Cauſes of Divine Help, or the reaſons why God will help his People?

Firſt, In reſpect of that relation he bears towards them, or that right and propriety he hath in them. Relations, though of ſmall entity, are of great efficacy. Now there is a near and intimate; yea, an united and manifold Relation between God and his People. They are related to him in Chriſt, that mighty one, on whom he hath laid help; though by nature afar off, yet by grace made nigh, and have a new and living way opened through his blood, whereby they draw nigh to God, and beg help and ſuccour from him, *Heb.* 4. *ult.* He is the ſaving ſtrength of his Anointed, *Pſal.* 28. 7. Or by his Anointed, as ſome read, the ſtrength of their ſalvation by Chriſt. They are related to him in covenant. He is their God, and they are his people. And being their God, therefore he muſt needs become their ſalvation. As *Moſes* ſings, *Exod.* 15. 2. Salvation is of the Lord, and his bleſſing is upon his People, *Pſal.* 3. *ult.* He is their Shepherd, and they are his Sheep,

sheep; their Maker, and they his Image; the work of his hands, and what is a man more tender of than his picture, or a King more nice than of his coin? The Father protects and provides for his Children; though Prodigals, he takes some care of them. The Husband helps and defends the Wife. Our Law saies, *Uxori lis non intenditur*, no suit can be commenced against a Wife, because she is under Covert-barn. The friend is helpful and beneficial to the friend; whom should a man expect relief from in his strait, but from his friends? *A Friend is born for Adversity, and is better than a Brother.* God is a Father and friend to his People. *As a Father pities his children, so does the Lord pity them that fear him.* Doubtless, thou art our Father — *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father.* Isa. 64. 8. *And if we being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children*, and should be worse than Infidels, if we did not provide for them, *how much more shall our heavenly Father take care of his children?* Yea, he is the Husband of his People, *Isa.* 54. 5. For thy Maker is thine Husband; from him they may expect, and to him they may seek for protection. *Abraham* was called, *the friend of God*, Jam. 2. 23. He is their Master, and they are his Servants; their King, and they his Subjects. Now, no Master but will maintain his Servant in the work he does for him, and by his order and appointment, he will alwaies maintain the cause of his Servants. Princes will defend their Subjects in the way of their duty and allegiance. This is the Churches Argument in her prayer for mercy, *Psal.* 44. 4, *Thou art my King, O God, command deliverances*

deliverances for Jacob. Yea, this is a firm co
cluſion of her faith, *Iſa.* 33. 22. *The Lord is o*
Judge, our Law-giver, our King, he will save
They are ſtiled his portion and heritage, *Iſa.* 54. 1
Deut. 32. 9. As he is their, ſo they his portio
and he will not ſuffer that to be waſted and en
bezelled. His Jewels, in compariſon of whom a
the world beſides are but as ſo much lumbe
Mal. 3. 17. He will not admit their ſpoil
plunder. His Turtle, *Pſal.* 74. 19. which hath a
waies a ſympathy with its mates affliction. Hi
beloved favourites, for whom he hath a choic
reſpect, and endeared affection, in whom h
takes ſingular delight and complacency, *Pſa*
18. 19. and 60. 5. Their heart is ſet on God, an
his heart on them; and becauſe he loveth them,
he compaſſeth them with favour as with a ſhield
Pſal. 5. 12. The apple of his eye, *Zach.* 2. 8. Now
as the eye is the tendereſt part of the body, ſo
is the apple of the eye. They are his hidden
ones, for privacy and value, worth and excellen-
cy; more excellent than their neighbours, the leaſt,
meaneſt of them more worth than all the world;
a people of whom the world is not worthy,
Heb. 11. 38. His precious ones, *Iſa.* 43. 4. In
compariſon of whom, all other are but vile in
his account. His holy ones, *Pſal.* 86. 2. which he
will not ſuffer the world to prophane. His cho-
ſen ones, or the people of his choice: *The Lord*
hath choſen Jacob unto himſelf, and Iſrael for his
peculiar Treaſure, Pſal. 135. 4. His redeemed ones,
or the people of his purchaſe, *Iſa.* 43. 3. which
he will in no wiſe loſe, either by fraud or vio-
lence; his Garden or Paradiſe, wherein he de-

lights,

ghts, *Iſa.* 58. 18. His Vineyard, which he both aters, and watches every moment, *Iſa.* 27. 3. n a word, his *Jacob* and *Iſrael*, againſt whom here is no inchantment or divination, *Numb.* 13. nd the work of his hands, which he will in o caſe forſake, *Pſal.* 138. *ult.* And concerning hich he will not only be intreated, but alſo com-anded, *Iſa.* 45. 11. There is a mutual intereſt d propriety between God and his People. God ath made over himſelf to them in the Covenant f Grace, and they have reobliged themſelves to m. They are ſaid to have ſurrendred or given themſelves to the Lord, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. *He ſhall uſe our inheritance for us*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *al.* 47. 4. They have a ſtock of prayers going ith God, and he hath a ſtock of mercy and ory going with them: Their intereſts are ſo ited, and twiſted together, as they cannot be vered. His cauſe is concern'd in his People, d his own honour highly ingaged upon their count; yea, the vindication of all his Attri-utes, his Power, Wiſdom, Holineſs, Mercy and oodneſs, Truth and Faithfulneſs is obliged in eir ſublevation, which elſe would be wholly oſt, and utterly impaired in the world. They re ſo linked in an holy league, and ſacred con-deracy with him; That it's obſervable in eir addreſſes to him in prayer againſt their nemies, they level them as againſt Gods inte-eſt, and not their own; and all they need re-queſt is, only that God may be glorified. So *Da-id*, Pſal. 83. 2. *Lo, thine enemies make a tumult; nd they that hate thee have lift up the head.* He doubts not to call his, Gods enemies. And ſo

Aſa

Asa in his solemn supplications put up to God o the approach of that innumerable host against hi 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *O Lord* (saith he) *thou art o God, let not man prevail against thee.* Not us, b thee. As Gods glory is bound up in the sa bundle with his Peoples eternal, so is it also wi their temporal salvation.

Secondly, In respect of the manifold Promis and Engagements he hath made to them. Go hath ingaged for their security, and boun himself for their protection, as well as the provision, so far as is necessary. They are stiled *The People of his Covenant*, Psal. 111. 12. And th stipulation is mutual. They are in covenan with God, obliged to his service, and devoted t his fear. *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I a thy Servant* (saith *David*) *Psal.* 116. 16. The are engaged to walk in his waies, and to be foun faithful. And God is a God in covenant wit them; and as they never leave him, so will he ne ver leave them in their enemies hand, *Psal.* 37. 3 As they defend his glory, so will he their intere and cause. If God be a God keeping Covenant even with them, while in lesser things they some times break with him, (*Psal.* 89 34.) Muc more will he keep Covenant with them while they fear him. Though salvation be far from th wicked, his salvation is with them that fear him And as they are included in a general Covenant so have they entailed upon them many gracio promises of special protection. He hath said *He will never leave nor forsake them*, Heb. 13. 5 The same promise he made to all *Israel*, *Deut* 31. 8. and made good to *Joshua* in person, he also accom-

ccompliſheth to all Believers; *He will not forſake his People, or caſt off his Inheritance. He will have compaſſion on his dwelling-place; he will comfort Sion, and chuſe Jeruſalem.* They have Gods promiſe for help and deliverance in the day of trouble, *Pſal.*50.15. which is good ſecurity. They are under a reſerved promiſe, under the Judgements of Sword, Famine or Peſtilence, *Amos* 9. 8. *Iſa.* 33. *Pſal.* 91. 10. Which kind of promiſes, though not abſolute engagements, yet are ſeaſonable directions, and comfortable incouragements in times of calamity and affliction. They are alwaies priſoners of hope; for by the blood of the Covenant God will ſend them out of the pit wherein there is no water, *Zach.* 9. 11. Covenants of old were confirmed by Sacrifices, *Pſal.* 50. 5. *Jer.* 34. *Et cæſa jungebant fœdera porca.* —*Virgil*—The Lord Jeſus Chriſt by the blood of his Covenant hath bought outward and common, as well as ſaving and eternal mercies for his People.

Thirdly, In regard of thoſe conditions of obtaining Divine Help, which are ever found in them. They are under a fitneſs and aptitude of diſpoſition to receive it. There are four conditions or qualifications eſpecially, which make them meet for this divine influence, which are to be found in them.

The firſt is of Humility, or ſpiritual Poverty, *Pſal.* 34. 8. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and ſaveth them that be of a contrite ſpirit.* He beholds the proud afar off, as ſcorning his tuition; but he graciouſly beholds the humble, *Iſa.* 66.2. In him the fatherleſs finde mercy.

mercy. *A Father of the fatherleſs, and Judge of the Widow is he out of his holy habitation*, Pſal. 68.5,6. The Lord helpeth thoſe that are caſt down. The Lion puts (as it were) into his boſome thoſe that bow before him, or lie down at his feet, but tears in pieces them that run away from him, or bid reſiſtance to him; ſo generous and noble is his nature and diſpoſition, *ſatis eſt proſtraſſe*— And ſo does the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, he is a Lion to lofty and ſturdy ſinners, but a Lamb to depreſſed and dejected ſouls. Such as advance themſelves to the Throne, God brings down to the footſtool, but to thoſe that patiently bear the Croſs, he reacheth forth the Crown. He revives the ſpirits of the humble, and the hearts of the contrite ones.

Secondly, Prayer and Invocation. Gods People are a praying people, a generation of ſeekers, and ſuch commonly are ſpeeders. God ſends none away that ſo come to him with a *non inventus*: He never ſaid to the ſeed of *Jacob*, ſeek ye my face in vain. They ſeek his face, righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and he is found of them. When *Jehoſaphat* was compaſſed about with the *Syrian* Hoſt, and had no way to fly but up to Heaven; he cries to the Lord, and he helped him, 2 *Chron.* 18. 31. The Saints alone betake themſelves to God and his help, run to him as their Sanctuary; others fly from Gods preſence, run to the Rocks, and the tops of the ragged Rocks, call to the hills and the mountains; but a child of God goes only and tells his Father, and before him laies open his cauſe. As good *Hezekiah* did, when *Rabſhaketh* came out againſt him, O Lord, I am oppreſſed,

preſſed, undertake for me, or the Church, *Iſa.* 33.2. *Be thou our Arm every morning, and our ſalvation in the time of trouble.* They only ſenſibly need, and ſo alone crave and implore divine ſuccour. And God will not ſuffer his People to loſe the precious treaſure of their prayers, *Pſal.* 145.18,19. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the deſire of them that fear him; he will alſo hear their cry, and ſave them.* So *Pſal.* 91. 14, 15. *Becauſe he hath ſet his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my Name, he ſhall call upon me, and I will anſwer him* — That God who prepares his Peoples heart to pray, prepares alſo his own ear to hear; and he that promiſeth to hear before we call, will never deny to hearken, when we cry unto him. *Ideo premuntur juſti, ut preſſi clament, clamantes exaudiantur,* ſaith *Calvin.* Oppreſſions and afflictions make man cry, and cries and ſupplications make God hear, *Pſal.* 141. 1, 2. — Spreading forth our hands in believing and fervent prayer, is the only way of graſping mercy. God hath given full aſſurance by promiſe, of grants on ſuch applications even under the infliction of the greateſt judgements and calamities, 1 *King.* 8 37. 2 *Chron.* 6. 28. — If publick mercy does not, yet particular at leaſt alwaies follows as an anſwer of prayer, *Pſal.* 32. 6. *For this ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found:* There's the voice of prayer: What is the Eccho of mercy appears in the very next words, *Surely in the floods of great waters they ſhall not come nigh to him.*

Thirdly, Faith and dependance on God, and expectation from him. He that comes unto God (and goes not away as he comes ſad from his preſence) muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. It's the periphraſis that *David* deſcribes him by, *The Saviour of them that truſt in him*, Pſal. 17. 7. In this hope and confidence the Prophet placeth mans bleſſedneſs, *Jer.* 17. 7. *Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, whoſe hope the Lord is. The Lord is a buckler to them that truſt in him*, Pſal. 18. 30. God is to his People whatſoever by faith they make him: Faith makes all that is in God a mans own; it engageth all Gods Attributes, and ſets them at work for his People; it obligeth him in point of honour to come in for their relief: Who will be found ſo unworthy as to fail them that truſt to him? If a friend truſt to us for ſupply, counſel, aſſiſtance, we will by no means diſappoint him. Nay, if an enemy delivers himſelf up into our hands, and confides in us for ſecreſie, we will not be ſo diſingenuous as to betray him; much leſs will God ever prove unfaithful to us, while we are faithful to him. Faith calls in help from Heaven; it ſaith to God as the men of *Macedonia* to *Paul*, *Come over and help us*. God is known in her Palaces to be a refuge. Our Fathers truſted in thee, and were not confounded, *Pſal.* 22. 5. Unbelief hinders eſtabliſhment, but Faith uſhers in proſperity. It's a riddle to Philoſophy to fetch ſtrength from another to undergo a burden; but Faith hath a ſecret vertue to fetch ſtrength from God, either as to doing good, or bearing evil. *The Lord takes pleaſure in them that fear him,*

him, that hope in his mercy, Pſal. 147. 11. *He is a Sun and Shield to them that truſt in him,* Pſal. 84. 12. Hope in him never makes the ſoul aſhamed. God never forſakes ſuch as are dependants (by faith) upon him: They that truſt in him, ſhall never become deſolate. *David* urgeth this frequently in this book of Pſalms for help and protection, *Pſal.* 57. 1. *Be merciful to me, O God, for my ſoul truſteth in thee,* Pſal. 86. 2. *O thou my God, ſave thy Servant that truſteth in thee.* Pſal. 7. 1. So *Pſal.* 71. 1. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my truſt, let me never be put to confuſion.* It's obſervable, that Gods being a rock and a refuge are joyned in Scripture, *Pſal.* 46. 1. God is his Peoples refuge which they fly to, their habitation they continually reſort to, and therefore he becomes their help. Though creatures are broken reeds, and crackt ciſterns, yet God was never a broken ſtaff, a dry and barren wilderneſs to his People. Now Gods children are not only an humble and a praying, but a believing and depending people. As the child hangs on its Mothers breaſts; ſo do his children on their Fathers bowels. We finde holy *David* uſually profeſſing his confidence in his God, *Pſal.* 62. 1. *Truly my ſoul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my ſalvation.* And ſo *verſe* 5. *My ſoul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. The Lord is my ſtrength, and therefore is become my ſalvation,* Pſal. 118. 14. The People of God know his Name, and therefore will truſt in him, *Pſal.* 9. 10. They are a people who will not lie, by falſeneſs to their profeſſion and principles, or vain confidence in ſecond cauſes, or creature-comforts; a poor afflicted people, that

truſt in the Name of the Lord, that will not lie, nor do iniquity, *Zeph.* 3. 12, 13. The hypocrite leans on his houſe, as *Job* ſpeaks, his parts, priviledges, profeſſion, common grace. The wicked man truſts in chariots and horſes, armies and navies, his riches and revenues, power and carnal policies, ſhifts and devices, friends, wit, or wealth, *Pſal.* 49. But what ſaith the pious and devout ſoul? he breaths forth himſelf in *David*'s dialect, *Pſal.* 20. 7. *Some truſt in chariots and in horſes, but we will remember the Name of the Lord.* A Saint leans only on the ſtaff of *Jacob*, the holy one of *Iſrael*; he hath no other ſtring to the bow of his truſt, but God alone; he expects help no where, but from Heaven: *Thou art my hope, (ſaith Jeremiah) in the day of evil*, Jer. 17. 17. God is by right the confidence of the ends of the earth, but by act, the ſole dependance of his People. They truſt in him at all times, and pour forth their hearts before him. Even under the moſt diſmaying providences, which ſtrike amazement into others hearts, and dejection into their countenances; yea, ſet the world into an uproar and combuſtion; under his skirt do their ſouls truſt.

Fourthly, Waiting and attendance upon him. Gods People are attendants at the Court of Heaven, alwaies waiting at the elbow of the Almighty. As they are a praying, ſo a waiting people; when they have ſent out the Dove of prayer, they wait for her return with an Olive-branch in her mouth: when they have ſent forth the ſhip of ſupplication, they ſtand like Merchants on the ſhore, expecting her return, full fraught with heavenly

heavenly treaſure. They wait upon the God of *Jacob*, and look toward him: They hearken and hear what God ſpeaks, having ſpoken, attend the Eccho, and diſpatcht their letters, look for an anſwer. Now eye hath not ſeen, no ear heard, nor can the heart of man conceive, what God hath prepared for them that wait for him, *Iſa.* 64. God waits to be gracious to them that wait for him, *Iſa.* 30. 18. Such as wait on him, with ſubmiſſion and reſignation to his will and pleaſure, due reſpect to his glory, and patient reſolution till he ſhews mercy, ſhall never loſe their labour. When *Davids* eyes attend his God, as the eyes of a Servant look to the hand of his Maſter, and a Maiden to the hand of her Miſtreſs, he is ſure of receiving ſome gift of mercy from him, *Pſal.* 123. 2. When his ſoul waits for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, the Sun of divine goodneſs will certainly riſe, break forth, and ſhine upon him, *Pſal.* 130. 6. God inclines to the ſoul that waits patiently for him; none ever waited on him in vain. Saints alwaies get ſomething by praying, but by waiting they gain double. The ſtill child ſhall have two breads. When the Church reſolves once to wait, God ſoon reſolves, ſhe ſhall wait no longer, but of an expectant, makes her an enjoyer, *Micah* 7. 7, 9. The Prince ſoon gives ear to the Favourite, who continues to give him attendance, and the Advocate delaies not to plead the Clients Cauſe, who will not away from his Chamber door, but determines to ply him with his over-eager ſollicitations; yea, the longer it be, before the ſhip of faith and prayer returns, when it once comes

home, it is the more richly laden, and brings him a double venture: The Church found it so, when she came home top and top-gallant with her sails of triumph, *Isa.* 25. 9. *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his salvation.* The needy shall not alwaies be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor perish for ever.

Fourthly, In respect of that incouragement in his service, which he would have his receive from him, even against the wicked, who do not serve him. The Lord takes part with his People, and helps them against the world, that hate both him and them, *Psal.* 118. 11. When most the object of mens envy and malignity, they have most of Gods love and affection: when out-casts to their Brethren, they are received into their Fathers arms. God would have the wicked discouraged in their way of rebellion, and his People incouraged in the way of duty. And by this they know he favours them, because their enemies do not triumph over them, *Psal.* 41. 11. Did not God take in with his People, and stand by them, the uncircumcised would triumph, and the Saints be dispirited and despondent: he assigns this therefore as the reason, why he would not contend for ever with them, lest their adversaries should carry it strangely, *Deut.* 32. 27. and their spirits fall into a desperate succumbency, *Isa.* 57. 16. Now when he pours contempt on their haughtiness, and advances the poor on high from affliction, the righteous rejoyce, and all iniquity stops her mouth, *Psal.* 107. 42. On which very account *David* solicits

ſolicits help, *Pſal.* 109. 26, 27, 29; that his adverſaries might be cloathed with ſhame, and cover themſelves with their own confuſion as with a Mantle; while the righteous are glad in the Lord, and truſt in him, and all the upright in heart do glory. The Maſter ſometimes ſmiles on the diligent and faithfull Servant, as to encourage him in his duty, ſo to diſcourage the negligent in his lazineſs; and the Prince ſhines on his Subject, as to countenance him in his loyalty and allegiance, ſo to diſhearten the Traitor in his Treaſon and Rebellion.

Fifthly, In regard of that juſt return and due improvement of his help, which he receives from them. They are thoſe alone who will praiſe and magnifie, extoll and lift up the Name of the God of *Jacob*. Being their ſtrength, he becomes their Song, and their Praiſe. Hear holy *Jeremiah* proclaiming him upon this Experience. *Jer.* 17. 14. *O Lord, my ſtrength, and my fortreſs, and my refuge in the day of affliction.* And ſo our *David* before him. Pſal. 18. 1. *O Lord, my rock, my ſtrength, my fortreſs, and my deliverer, my God, my Buckler, the horn of my ſalvation, and my high Tower.* And *Moſes* before them both. *Exod.* 15. 2. When the *Egyptians* were drowned, and *Iſrael* preſerved, he cants forth a moſt heavenly Doxology. *The Lord is my ſtrength and ſong, and he is become my ſalvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation, my Fathers God, and I will exalt him.* What the Saints win by prayer, they alwayes wear by Thankfulneſs; what they receive in Mercy, they return in Duty. Where there is *gratiarum decurſus*, there is alſo *gratiarum recurſus.*

ſus. Let favour be ſhewed to the wicked, and he will deal injuſtly: The ſhines of Mercy which draw out the fragrancy of the Saints graces, raiſe but a greater ſtench from the dunghill of his corruptions. They ſacrifice to their own Nets, and ſay, their own arm hath ſaved them. But the Church gives other language, *Pſal.* 44. 3. *Thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance; becauſe thou hadſt a favour to them.* Let God grant the *Jews* deliverance from the yoke of cruel and bloody Maſters, and give them free entertainment in his Service, they will wear the Livery of Joy and Gladneſs, and with their beſt Ornament of a gratefull Affection celebrate to future Poſterity the Anniverſary Solemnity of this good day of their deliverance. As Gods People go to him alone, and offer a ſin-offering in the day of their miſery and calamity, ſo they return to him only with a Peace-offering in the day of their mercy and comfort. They give unto the Lord the glory due to his Name, and what they want in outward expreſſion is abundantly ſupply'd in inward affection and admiration. He becomes their praiſe, becauſe he is their Salvation; yea, their boaſt and triumph all the day long: They make mention of his Name, and his Righteouſneſs, and that only. Neither do they with the prophane *Iſraelites* ſing his Praiſes, and forget his works, but as they talk honourably, ſo they, and they alone walk worthy of his help, (and ſo in a comparative ſenſe may be ſaid to deſerve it.) They abuſe not the goodneſs of God (as wicked men do, who ſpend all their Mercies upon their luſts, and ſacrifice them to their

their own ſenſuality;) but duely improve it, by ordering their Converſations aright; returning all the ſhines of mercy by reflections of obedience, doing juſtly, and walking humbly with their God; offering up themſelves back to him as a living, holy and acceptable ſacrifice, as their λογικὴ λατρεία, their *reaſonable ſervice*: Thereby bringing themſelves within the compaſs of his gracious promiſes, of ſeeing his great ſalvation, and having the effect of righteouſneſs to them quietneſs, and peace and aſſurance for ever. Thus holy *David* profeſſes and reſolves, *Pſal.* 116. 8, 9. *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the living.* And ſo much for the firſt particular, The Communication of Gods help to his people.

The Second follows, *viz.* The manner of its conveyance to his people. Not as the God of Nature, or of the World, but as the God of *Jacob*. And indeed, God in a way of Covenant, or as *Jacob*'s God, is the cauſe and fountain of all good and mercy to his people: All their bleſſing comes not by way of common Providence, but ſpecial Covenant. Their Corn, Wine and Oyle are Appendices thereunto. They have the comforts of this, and hopes of the next life, the bleſſings of the Throne and Footſtool, of Gods hand and heart too, by way of promiſe. *Although my Houſe be not ſo with God,* (ſaith the ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael* in his dying Notes, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.) *yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: For this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.*— All the ſweet ſtreams of mercy to a Believer

liever come ſwimming through the Channel o their Saviours blood, and his comforts are al ſifted and ſtrained through the Covenant of grace ſo as they loſe their bran and dreggs, and ar infinitely more ſweet and refreſhing. This very conſideration both ſweetens and ſanctifies all Others Gardens are watered by the foot, as the Land of *Egypt* was by the River *Nilus*, but they are watered from Heaven. *Deut.* 11.11. The ſweet hony-dews of mercy drop into their mouths from Heaven, and while they open them wide, God fills them. This gives a ſweeter taſte, a better tenure (a title *in Capite*) creates a ſanctified uſe, and confirms to them their aſſurance of a ſupply: others may poſſibly, they certainly ſhall have help and comfort. So that the application of this ſpecial relation is a great advantage and fortification to Gods peoples Faith. And indeed ſo intended here. The *Pſalmiſt* here gives him this title, to perſwade us to a more firm dependance upon him, and lay us in with a ſurer ground of confidence, than is to be had, or found in all things beſides either in Heaven, or Earth. And upon this very ſcore doth God uſually reveal himſelf by that Name, and his People ordinarily behold him under that notion, in Scripture. Not to multiply places, take one which may be *inſtar omnium*, *Pſal.* 20. 1. where the Church thus accents her Benediction. *The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble, the Name of the God of* Jacob *defend thee.* Where ſhe makes it a kinde of an Holy Spell to chaſe away all her Enemies, and expell her Adverſaries. But ſo much for the firſt general branch of the words. The Thing imply'd.

The

The Second follows, ſomething expreſſed, which is *The Happineſs in having God for our Help.* This is delivered poſitively, and alſo comparatively.

Firſt, Poſitively and abſolutely, in it ſelf. And ſo therein are two things conſiderable. 1. A Benedictory Concluſion or Affirmation, a ſentence of bleſſing pronounced. *Happy is he*— 2. Its limitation affixed or annexed, in the peculiar appropriation, expreſſed in the poſſeſſive *His. His help*— Here is the Saints great priviledge with their ſingular propriety. Their priviledge in having God as an Help: Their peculiarity in having him as their help.— To begin with the firſt. The Benediction affirmed. *Happy is he*— and that hints to us two Obſervations, one more general, the other more particular.

Firſt, *That the Saints happineſs lies only in God, in intereſt in him, in union and communion with him. God only is the certain ground, and infallible foundation of the Saints happineſs.* Their bleſſedneſs lies not in having ſuch relations to men, or influence from the World, but in their acquaintance with, and experience of God. The Pſalmiſt hath laid down an irrefragable Concluſion as to this, *Pſal.* 144. *ult.* when he had given in an accompt of the Worlds value and Eſtimate as to Happineſs, or taken a ſurvey of the perfections of all Creatures, and their moſt promiſing looks of felicity, ſo as he cryes out, *Happy are the People which are in ſuch a Caſe*, having hopefull and beautifull Children, full Proviſions, ſecure Dwellings, by an holy Epanortholis he corrects himſelf, yea *happy is that people* (ſaith he) *whoſe God is the Lord.*

This

This is eternal life, happineſs in the beginning, and perfection too, to know God in Jeſus Chriſt. Happineſs is not bound up in the Creature, or the bundle of Creature-enjoyments, riches may ſerve for the owners hurt, and not for their good, and as they may render a man occaſionally ſinfull, ſo they may leave him finally miſerable. *David* beggs deliverance from ſuch a mercy (as a man in an agony, or at the brink of the pit of deſtruction) *Deliver me from men whoſe portion is in this life*, Pſal. 17. 14. from their perſecutions, and alſo from their fruitions and enjoyments, as appears by the ſequel of his ſupplication. There's no bleſſedneſs in having the World for our God, but in having the Lord for our God. A man may (with the Bee) wander from Flower to Flower, from one Creature-enjoyment to another, and yet finde no ſweetneſs or ſatisfaction. It's only ſafe bleſſing our ſelves in the God of Truth. *Iſa.* 65. 16. Such as rejoyce in the World, rejoyce in a thing of nought. *Amos* 6. 13. It's he alone that made us, who can make us happy, and that gave ſatisfaction for us, who can give ſatisfaction to us: And though we had never ſo large handfulls of the World, if we have not our hearts full of God and Chriſt, we are farr from true happineſs. Three things are requiſite for the compleating of true Felicity, the conjunction whereof is that which renders the Soul happy, and in the want whereof it muſt be found compleatly miſerable: *Sufficiency* and *perfection*, *proportion*, and *perpetuity* or *duration*; and theſe are only found to centre in God himſelf, who is God ſelf and all-ſufficient, the portion of his peoples Souls, and God from everlaſting

everlaſting to everlaſting, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, who hath neither beginning of dayes, nor end of life, but is the ſame yeſterday, to day, to morrow, and for ever. But this is only imply'd. —

Secondly, and more particularly with reference to the chief ſcope and intendment of the Text, (as the notion of help ſpeaks a relation to the circumſtances of an evil time) a time of diſappointment and affliction,) obſerve,

That the ſupreme, yea ſole ground of comfort and confidence in an evil day (a day wherein a ſoul needs help) is intereſt in God. O thrice happy is that Soul that in any day, eſpecially in a day of trouble and affliction, hath God for his Help. This was all the Muſick of *Davids* Joy, when on the top of the waters of diſtreſs, and outward diſconſolation. This was his ſole encouragement, that ſpake well to his Soul, when all things ſeemed to look aſquint on him, and be againſt him. 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. This was the only ſurviving hope of the Prophet *Jeremiah* in the day of evil. This was the alone remaining prop of the Churches Conſolation in times of greateſt perſecution, *Mic.* 7. and depopulation, *Hab.* 3. This was the ground of her acclamations under all worldly diſturbances and commotions. *The Lord of Hoſts is with us, the God of* Jacob *is our refuge*, Pſal. 46. 7. Now the verity of this point will appear, and be made good from a double conſideration; Both from the Nature of God, and alſo the manner, or the peculiar properties of that Help he affords his people.

Firſt, From the Nature of God, who is his Peoples Helper. Now (amongſt many other) there are four or five things eſpecially conſiderable in

in God, which beſpeak the Saints happineſs intereſted in him, in an evil day.

Firſt, The Infiniteneſs of his Being, *Iſa.* 40. 12, 13, 14, —28, 29. — All his Attributes are equal, becauſe they are all infinite. Who hath limited the holy one of *Iſrael*, or can confine him that is Eternity? *Canſt thou by ſearching finde out God?* Job 11. 7. Though we may know him to ſalvation, who can know him to perfection? Creatures are all finite, though never ſo excellent, but his underſtanding is infinite: His Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Holineſs, Truth and Mercy, all carry an infinity with them. He is not meaſurable by the line of humane reaſon, or fathomable by the plummet of any created underſtanding; but ſtill we muſt cry out, ὁ βάθος, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgements, and his waies paſt finding out?* Rom. 11. 33. He can do every thing, and no thought can be with-holden from him, *Job* 42. 2. Men can do ſomething, but God can do all things; he is omniſcient, omnipotent, and omnidiſponent. Now all the wants and ſtraits of the creature are but finite, and *inter finitum, & infinitum nulla eſt proportio*; there is no proportion between finite afflictions, and infinite compaſſions.

Secondly, The Abſoluteneſs and Independency of his actings. He doth whatſoever he pleaſeth in Heaven, or Earth, or all deep places, *Pſal.* 135. 6. He ſits on the circle of the Heavens, and all the Inhabitants of the earth are but as ſo many Graſhoppers before him. All the Inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according

according to his will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou? There is none *αὐτάρκης*, abſolute and independent, but God only: ſo miraculous is his providence, as he does great things paſt finding out; yea, and wonders without number, *Job* 9. 10. All ſecond cauſes depend on him for their being, motion and operations, and in every ſtrait and exigency that befalls, muſt ſay as the King to the woman, *Except the Lord helps, we cannot help.* But though Heaven acts on *hæc inferiora*, the firſt cauſe on the ſecond, it never goes to the ſecond, while that ever goes to the firſt. The ſpring depends not on the ſtream, though that depends on the fountain: All created beings depend upon God, though he depends on no created perfections; but for, through, and to him are all things. His own arm (when that of the creatures is quite withered) can work ſalvation to him, and his righteouſneſs ſuſtain him.

Thirdly, The Immutability of his purpoſe and promiſes. He works all things according to the counſel of his own will. And his decrees iſſue forth as between mountains of braſs, *Zach.* 6. 1. His counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure, *Iſa.* 46. 10. If he decrees, who can diſannul? he cannot lie or repent, but will perform all he hath ſpoken, his whole word to his Servants.

Fourthly, The Tenderneſs of his bowels. He hath not only a fulneſs, and riches of grace, but exerciſeth a freeneſs in his operations; and while creatures act according to deſert, he doth all from free

free grace, and hath abundance of compaſſions which are never failing to his People. He is πατὴρ οἰκτιρμῶν, the Father of pities and compaſſions, and they are all the genuine off-ſpring of uncreated goodneſs. He hath the wiſdom of a Father, and the bowels of a Mother, *Iſa.* 41. 15. Mercy is his darling, which pleaſeth him, *Micah* 7. 18. The *Benjamin* of his delight; he will not alwaies chide, nor be angry for ever. As a tender Shepherd carries his Lambs, ſo does he his People in his boſome: his bounty may be ſeen in his bowels, as in an Anatomy, *Hoſ.* 11. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up, O Ephraim! — mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.*

Fifthly, The Eternity of his exiſtence. He is the eternity of *Iſrael*, the rock of ages, and God of all Generations. Creatures are but of yeſterday, and muſt ſhortly ſay to corruption, Thou art our Father, and to the worms, ye are our Brethren and Siſters: but his years have no end, and endure throughout all generations. He that builds on him, ſhall never be aſhamed, but have an everlaſting foundation. *In the Lord Jehovah,* (Iſa. 26. 4.) *is everlaſting ſtrength.* So that put all theſe together, and they muſt needs ſpeak his People happy in the worſt of times, whoſe help is laid on ſuch an infinite, immutable, independent, compaſſionate, and eternal God, as their only refuge.

Secondly, It's demonſtrable from the manner of his ſupply and help. And ſo their happineſs in this their intereſt appears,

First, *A facultate*, from his ability to help: he

is

is the Mighty God, yea, the Almighty, *Gen.* 17.1. An able and ſelf-ſufficient, yea an Alſufficient God to his people; he hath pleonaſms of grace, and can do abundantly, yea, ſuperabundantly for his, above all they can ask or think, *Epheſ.* 3.20. He hath not *plenitudinem vaſis*, but *fontis*; a fulneſs of redundancy, as well as of abundance. Does the ſoul want pardon, he can abundantly pardon; grace, he gives gifts even to the rebellious; comfort, he is the Father of mercies, and God of all conſolations. He knows our wants, yea and our thoughts long before; and when we know not what to ask, yet he knows what to give. He is able to help againſt ſin, its guilt, its ſtrength; againſt temptations, though Satan be mighty, he is Almighty, againſt afflictions from himſelf, or oppoſitions from the world. The ſhields of the earth are his, and he can weild them as he pleaſeth, *Pſal.* 47.9. His very *intueri* is *operari*, and one ſmile of his beatifical face, is able to create more ſollace, than all the frowns of the world can ſadneſs or diſcomfort. This was the pillar of *Abraham*'s faith, *Rom.* 4.21. Knowing, *what he had promiſed, he was able to perform* —

Secondly, *A voluntate.* Men oft-times are willing to help, but not able, and many times able, but not willing; but God is as willing as able. He is alwaies ready to ſuccour and relieve his People: he is a God that waits to be gracious; yea, he is already engaged, *Call upon me, and I will anſwer thee.*

Thirdly, *Ab inſtantia auxilii*, from the preſentneſs and inſtancy of his help. He is a preſent help in time of trouble. Men oppreſſed oft miſ-

carry through help at a diſtance, but the Lord is alwaies near at hand to his people: he is their arm every morning, and in the evening the God of their life. *God is in the midſt of her, and ſhe ſhall not be moved, God ſhall help her, and that right early*, Pſal. 46. 5. *I am God, and not man, the holy one of Iſrael, in the midſt of thee*, Hoſ. 11. 9. He comes in the nick, ſeaſonably and opportunely, and brings ſalvation (if need be) on the wing, *Iſa.* 31. 5. *As birds flying, ſo will the Lord of Hoſts defend Jeruſalem; defending alſo, he will deliver it; and paſſing over, he will preſerve it. Veni, vidi, vici*, is his motto; he is ſlow to puniſhment, but quick to deliverance. *Then thou ſhalt call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer, thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, here I am*, Iſa. 58. 9. He is oft neareſt, when he ſeems furtheſt off. As he cuts ſhort his work in righteouſneſs, in reſpect of the wicked; ſo he brings near his righteouſneſs to his People, *Iſa.* 46. 13. *It ſhall not be far off, and his ſalvation ſhall not tarry*—

Fourthly, *A fidelitate*, from his faithfulneſs in helping. The reaſon of mens failure, is either want of ability, or want of fidelity; but *God is faithful who hath promiſed.* By promiſing he hath made himſelf a debtor, and he will not ſtand alwaies engaged, much leſs break his promiſe. His faithfulneſs cannot fail. The husband may be unfaithful to the wife, the father to the ſon, the Prince to the ſubject; but God will never be unfaithful to his People. Men may intend help, but be unexpectedly diſappointed, or pretend it, and yet really hinder; there is oft a conjunction of forces, where no union of hearts and affections.

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God made the woman to be a meet help to the man; and faithfulneſs is one of the principal duties that flows from conjugal relations, but yet oft-times they prove unfaithful, yea, perfidious, as *Dalilah* did to *Sampſon*; but God will never fail them that truſt in him. *He keepeth truth for ever*, verſ. 6.

Fifthly, *A conſtantia*, from the perpetuity and unchangeableneſs of his help. This the Pſalmiſt here adds by way of confirmation of his aſſertion of bleſſedneſs, *verſ.* 10. *The Lord ſhall reign for ever* — God alwaies lives and reigns. Men die, one generation comes, another goes, and none ſtayes, (but God ever lives as the Patron and Protector of his People. The King of Heaven never dies; under all the changes and viciſſitudes in this lower Region of the world, he ſtill abides a God, who changeth not. He is a ſtanding help, to which the ſoul may go, and reſort on all occaſions, *Pſal.* 71. 2. He will not forſake the work of his hands; he is a never fading and failing refuge. *Nevertheleſs* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *I am continually with thee; thou haſt holden me by my right hand. Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory*, Pſal. 73. 23, 24. We may let go our hold of God, but he will never let go his hold of us; by his grace we are kept from falling, and by his mighty power (φρουρουμένοι) are guarded to ſalvation. Let the Pſalmiſts inference conclude this point, *Pſal.* 48. *ult. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.*

And ſo much for the priviledge, or the bleſſing pronounced.

Secondly, Follows the propriety, or benediction applied, in this pronoun *his* — *his help* — whence obſerve,

Firſt, A Saint, and he alone hath a ſpecial intereſt and propriety in God. Others may have a common, but they only a ſaving intereſt. God may give the men of the world ſomething from himſelf, but he hath made himſelf only over to his People. They may call all their own but God, but theſe can call God theirs, when they have nothing elſe. *Abraham* gave the Sons of *Keturah* portions, but reſerved *Iſaac* the Inheritance, *Jehoſaphat* gave his other Sons gifts, but *Jehoram* the Kingdom. The earth God hath given to the children of men, but the Lord is the portion of his Peoples Inheritance, *Pſal.* 16. 5. Influence flows from intereſt, and intereſt flows only from union. *O God (ſaith David) my God: Thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee.* He, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is in him their God and Father. This new name none knows, but he that receives it.

Secondly, Obſerve, *Saints only can be juſt expectants of divine help and influence.* His help and ſalvation is to them that fear him. Fiducial recumbency on God flows only from the conſideration of our intereſt in him, and is founded on this bottom, that he is a God in covenant with us. He is firſt the God of *Jacob*, and then an help; that is the order here. My God, and then my ſalvation, *Job* 13. 16. He is a peculiar help to his People. The title he hath aſſumed to himſelf, *is the God of their ſalvation.* Indeed he is an help to others in a larger ſenſe, but by way of peculiarity, or ſingu-

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lar ſpecialty, the only help of his elect. They alone are, others are not under any diſtinguiſhing promiſe, but rather a threatning, *Iſa.* 65 13. *Behold* (ſaith God) *my Servants ſhall eat, but ye ſhall be hungry, my Servants ſhall drink, but ye ſhall be thirſty, they ſhall rejoyce, but ye ſhall be aſhamed.* And they only coming within compaſs of the promiſe, and ſo having a right to the mercy of it, can only juſtly hope, and confidently expect it. The wicked hath no hope. They alone can come with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace, and beg it in the time of their need. Wicked men have no God to go to, and how can they ever hope to come to God in an evil, who in a good day have run away from him? They alone will walk anſwerably to it, and therefore they only ſhall be the ſeats and ſubjects of it. The worldling indeed may have as large a ſail of confidence as a child of God hath, but he hath no good ballaſt of evidence: he may have a general hope in God as his God and Father, and ſo call him in prayer and by profeſſion; but *dolus in generalibus*: how can he be their Father, when they have not known him: *David*'s confidence is particular, and conjoyned with good evidence, of faith in him, and love to him, *Pſal.* 18. 1. *Cui nomini natura negatur, nomine deluditur.* He that uſurps a title to God, without a conformity to his Image, is but over-born, and impoſed upon by a damnable preſumption, inſtead of a grounded perſwaſion. The Lord knows who are his, and he that names his name muſt depart from iniquity.

The third Propoſition is, *That propriety in God is the only ground of true felicity.* Happy is he

that hath him for his help — That hath the Lord for his God — Propriety only causeth delight. *Lo, this is our God* — saith the Church. *My Lord and my God*, cries *Thomas*. *Israel shall cry to me my God, we know thee*, Hos. 8. 2. *Thou shalt call me my Father*, saith God by way of promise to his Church, *Jer.* 3. 19. When the Spouse would express her complacency and satisfaction in Christ she saies, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*. When Christ would comfort *Mary*, he tells her, *I ascend to your God, and my God*. When *Paul* would confirm and strengthen his faith, he adds, *who loved me, and gave himself for me*. The knowledge of God in himself is terrible. *It's dangerous* (saith *Luther*) *to go to an absolute God*. It's only the relative knowledge of him which affords comfort. *ut mea non prosint sine me, sic tua non prosint sine te*, saith *Bernard*. Our Civilians say, Mine is a better tenure than ours. If a man walks over pleasant Meadows, or in delightful Orchards and Gardens, and cannot say, they are his, he hath no content or comfort in them. If a soul should run over all the Attributes of God, and the Promises of the Gospel, and the sufferings of his Saviour, and cannot write mine, they are a burden, rather than a blessing. Propriety and interest is the only certain ground of influence and mercy. The Promises (indeed) of the Gospel are generally propounded, excluding none who shut not out themselves by their unbelief; but withall particular application is pressed, that none might rest in the naked notion, without peculiar appropriation: hanging on the outside of the Promise will do us no more good, than did them their hanging

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on the outſide of the Ark. The moſt ſoveraign Plaiſter heals not, if not applied; nor does the moſt delicious meat nouriſh, unleſs eaten and concocted. If ye eat my fleſh, and drink my blood, then ye have eternal life dwelling in you. Snatching at the Promiſe, without union with the Perſon, is altogether as unavailable to comfort the ſoul, as that phrenetick perſons challenge of all the ſhips that came to ſhore was to enrich him, when he had intereſt in none of them. Or as a Cheaters catch of an heireſſes writings is to entitle him to her eſtate, without marriage to her perſon. It's a good obſervation *Bernard* hath on that paſſage of the Church, *Iſa.* 26. 9. *With our ſoul in the night have we deſired thee* --- She ſaith not *tua*, but *te*. The gracious ſoul ſurrenders it ſelf up to God in a way of duty, ſaying, *Lord, I am thine*: and applieth God to himſelf in a way of mercy, crying out, , *Lord, thou art mine*. If *Solomon*'s Servants were counted by the Queen of *Sheba* happy in enjoying not ſo much his Court, as his company and preſence, then are the Saints much more to be eſteemed bleſſed, not ſo much in the fruition of the bare Promiſes, as in the viſion of their Fathers face in and through them. Bleſſed are they that dwell in his houſe, whoſe ſtrength is in him. Bleſſed are the people that hear the joyful ſound, that walk in the light of his countenance. The union between the King of Heaven and his Subjects, and holy confederation, is the riſe of all their priviledge and protection.

Fourthly, Obſerve, *They alone can expect help from God, that exerciſe in times of ſtrait and*

afflictions, a fiduciall recumbency upon him. That is gathered from the phraſe or form of the words. *Qui ponit in auxilium.* There's a tacite condition annexed, placing our help in God; plainly implying, That it's not the bare habit, but the act and exerciſe of faith, that entitles the ſoul to divine help, and ſo makes a man bleſſed and happy in evil times, times of diſappointment or dereliction, any trouble or affliction whatſoever. The Promiſe runs to the act of faith. As ye may finde it expreſſed to the life, *Pſal.* 91. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt made the Lord (who is my refuge) even the moſt high thy habitation* --- And indeed faith alone is that which makes uſe of Gods Attributes in time of diſtreſs. The habit of faith indeed intereſts in them, and makes them our own, but the exerciſe thereof draws them forth into act; that engageth God only in point of honour to come in for relief, even our firm dependance on him. What will all the treaſures of Gods Power, Wiſdom, Mercy and Goodneſs ſerve to enrich the the ſoul, if lockt up by unbelief? no more than a mans baggs, who never trades or imploys them. It's not intereſt, but uſe of God does the ſoul good. Indeed that delivers from eternal trouble, but this only ſupports under temporal. What good does a reſt or leaner do a man under his burden, if he never ſtaies himſelf on it? or a ſword or ſhield in a battel, if he never draws the one, or holds forth the other? or a ſanctuary and ſhelter in a ſtorm, if a man never runs to it, and houſes himſelf in it? what benefit of a friend, if a man never makes uſe of him in his ſtrait? little or no ſweetneſs or conſolation is to be found in any thing

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in God, his Attributes, Promiſes, or Providences, if we let them be dead and ruſt by us, and draw not out the vertue of them by faith. It's grace exerciſed only, which pleaſeth God, and alſo profits us. If we do not *recumbere*, we muſt *ſuccumbere*. *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower*, but only they which run to it are ſafe. And therefore the Prophet adviſeth this dependance on God as the only antidote againſt dedolency and deſperacy in dark conditions, and under ſad apprehenſions, *Iſa.* 50. 10. Let him that ſits in darkneſs, and ſees no light, truſt in the Name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God.

And ſo much for the abſolute conſideration.

Secondly, Take a comparative view of it. For the Pſalmiſt having been eying of creature-helps and ſuccours, turns away his eyes from beholding vanity; by a ſudden Apoſtrophy looks wholly off the creature to God, and while engaged in that aſpect, he reſolutely and confidently oppoſeth his manutenence to all humane helps within view conſidered. And if we take notice of it in that oppoſition, or contradiction to thoſe objects wherein wicked men uſually place their happineſs, it will ſuggeſt to us theſe two Obſervations.

Firſt, The excellency of God is much illuſtrated by the conſideration of the vanity of the creature. Theſe are Chryſtal-glaſſes, which ſet one againſt another, reflect a mutual light one to the other. The Word of God is a true proſpective, at the one end whereof, if we look, we ſhall ſee the world as a little mole-hill, at the other, God as a vaſt and great mountain: Indeed the glaſs of created perfections

perfections represents God, (as the Moon doth the Sun) when they stand in conjunction with and subordination to him; (his invisible glory and excellency is legible in the book of the Creatures,) but they do but darken his beauty when standing in opposition against him: And so do the theirs. The greater light extinguishes the less. *Lord how soon did those joyes vanish, when thou didst once enter into my Soul, who art clearer than the Sun, and purer than the Light it self*; saith *Austin*. The black-spots of Creature-deficiency set off the white colours of divine perfection with a most orient and beautifull lustre. As the sight of our sin appears most full in the glass of his purity and Holiness; so that of our Vanity in the glass of his Fulness, and of our misery in that of his glory and happiness. Gods fulness and our emptiness mutually illustrate one another.

Secondly, If we observe the words as brought in by way of opposition or comparison; so they speak an excellency in the enjoyment of God above all Creatures, and a felicity in his Help above all humane help:

First, Here is imply'd a comparison between God himself and the Creature, even the best of them, and so the Psalmist speaks him a God which hath a prelation and preheminence to all Creatures in their highest attainment and most glorious advances. The Souls happiness in the enjoyment of God is superexcellent and transcendent to what is to be found, and had in the Creature. The Saints enjoying God are more happy, blessed far above wicked men, who only enjoy the World: The one bears no proportion to the other.

other. We find *David* making out the compariſon between the Portions of his hand, and the Viſion of his Face, *Pſal.* 4. 7. & *Pſal.* 17. 14, 15. and how do's that caſt the ballance without all contradiction? *Lord, lift up the light of thy Countenance— Thou haſt put more gladneſs into my heart— As for me, I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs—* The Kings favour is to be preferred beyond his gifts. *Chryſantas*'s Kiſs exceeds *Artabarus*'s golden Wedge. *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth* (ſaith the Spouſe) *his love is better than Wine*, Cant. 1. 2. Curſed is he (ſaith that noble Convert) who preferrs not an hours communion with God before all the treaſures of the World. When as once *Charles* the fifth by his Herauld defied the King of *France*, under his multiplied titles, Emperour of *Germany*, King of *Caſtile*, *Leon*, *Arragon*, and *Naples*, Arch-duke of *Auſtria*, &c. *Francis* the Firſt returns his challenge only with the repetition of *France* as oft as might anſwer his petty Principalities; intimating that one *France* was more valuable than them all. And do's not *David* oppoſe his Intereſt in God to all the World, when he had taken a full ſurvey of all its glittering glory and bravery, even to envy, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* — God was beyond, and infinitely better than Relations, Eſtates, Friends, Pleaſures, Honours, Life, Earth, yea Heaven it ſelf, than all in his refined and raiſed apprehenſions: *Mallem in Gehenna eſſe cum te, quam in Cœlo ſine te*; *Luther* ſaith. And indeed God alone is a real, ſolid and ſubſtantial good, in reſpect of whom all other are but falſe, counterfeit and deceitfull. *Imaginaria in ſæculo & nihil*

nihil veri, ſaith *Tertullian*. The World it ſelf is like ſome perſons in it, empty, ſhallow-brain'd men, of a flaſhy, vapouring temper, the leſs ye know of them, the more ye value and eſteem them; acquaintance with them breeds ſlight and contempt of them: But the more we ſearch into God in whom there is a reall and infinite worth, the more excellency our Souls find in him, who is that *Puteus inexhauſtus*, never to be drawn dry by his Creatures; and in the Concluſion we muſt ſay, not the one half hath been found by us. It's with the World as with a Picture, the greater diſtance we ſtand from it, the better it looks, but the nigher we draw to God, (as to a beautifull face, and native Complexion,) the more delectable and deſireable aſpect. There's alwayes upon tryal, leſs in the World, but more in God than we could expect and look for. God is a pure and refined good, from all the droſs and dreggs of imperfection and corruption which adheres to, or inheres in all Creatures. He is a full and ſatisfying good, the ultimate perfection to which all Creatures tend, and wherein all deſires centre and find content and ſatisfaction. *Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth. Nimis avarus animus, cui unicus non ſufficit Deus.* Bernard. The Sun refreſhes without the Stars illumination. Had a man all the World in hand, his heart would not be at reſt, but (like the Needle toucht with the Load-ſtone, which is always moving towards the north point) would be inclining to God the firſt good, and utmoſt end. The enjoyment of God fills up all the chinks of a reaſonable Soul, and ſatisfies him alone in all wants, ſtraits, exigencies and

and extremities, though he hath nothing of the Creature; but notwithſtanding the greateſt confluence or influence of worldly comforts, and Creature accommodations (which God never made or intended for the Souls ſatisfaction) in the midſt of its ſufficiency, it is in ſtraits, and tantalizeth under its greateſt fulneſs: All its fruition is but a golden dream of a Feaſt by one rockt aſleep on the bed of ſecurity and ſelf-deceit, which to him once awakened to right apprehenſions, ſoon vaniſheth, and determines in a reall hunger. Many have been ſurfeited by the world, but none ſufficed, had too much to do their Souls good, but who almoſt ever ſaid, *I have enough.* To conclude this, (and dwell no longer on this firſt branch of the Text) God is (in a word) a durable and laſting, yea an everlaſting good, an enduring ſubſtance, a portion to his for ever. Creature-comforts are colours meerly wateriſh, which a little ſhower alters, but divine conſolations, as colours laid in Oyl, which the greateſt ſtorm will not wear off, or fetch out. Creatures are all ſtanding Ponds, or crackt Ciſterns, ſoon dryed up; but God an ever-running and flowing Fountain; in whom there is (as the Father ſpeaks) *ſerenitas ſine nube, ſatietas ſine labe, felicitas ſine fine*, Clearneſs without cloud, fulneſs without want, felicity without end. Yea, as his People are beſt at laſt to him, ſo is he to them: The World indeed is beſt at firſt, but God, at laſt ſweeteſt to the Soul. The firſt taſtes of God are exceeding delightfull, witneſs *Solomons* Canticles, when young, and in the prime of his affections. The largeſt and longeſt draughts of the World

World leave with them a tang of bitterneſs in the end, witneſs his *Vanity of Vanities*, in the ſtrength of his Experience. The faſhion of this World and all things here below paſſeth away, and no wonder, for all created beings carry about them principles of ſelf-deſtruction, but God and his Word endure for ever.

And as a Saints happineſs conſiſts in the enjoyment of God above all things beſides; ſo is it aggravated by having intereſt in his help above all humane help and ſuccour whatſoever. And if we ſhould draw out the compariſon at length (which I ſhall not for fear of interfering, and too much enlarging) we ſhould finde there were indeed no compariſon; And that there were none holy as the Lord, none ſuch a rock as our God. There is a vaſt difference, and ſo tranſcendency of divine Help to humane, in reſpect of its abſoluteneſs and immediateneſs: All the help of Creatures is but mediate through the uſe of other Cauſes or Inſtruments, and but conditional on ſuppoſal of divine concurrence; *If he withdraws not his anger, the proud Helpers do ſtoop under him*, Job 9. 13. All Creatures borrow their light from that Sun, derive their ſtrength from that Arm. Second cauſes cannot help without the concourſe and influence of the firſt; Men may pity, but the Lord only can help: But though they cannot help without him, he can work without them as well as by them. God and all the Creatures, is no more than God without any of them. All Creature-help is but ſecondary, but his is the prime and original. The help of Creatures is but particular and partial. Some men will aſſiſt ſome perſons,

perſons and ſome others; ſome will help their friends, and others their Neighbours, or Dependants, or take in with thoſe that ſtand, and are on the ſurer ground, and ſtronger ſide. But God helps all that call upon him, even thoſe which are fallen down, as well as thoſe that ſtand upright. Some things will help in ſome caſes, one thing in wants, another in ſickneſs, a third under dangers: but no one good thing is to be found in the World, that hath in it an univerſal vertue and efficacy: but God is a *πᾶν φάρμακον*, and his grace a catholique remedy under all trials and troubles, and can ſuccour under leſs afflictions, and alſo under greater; when the troubles of our heart are enlarged, he can enlarge the hand of his grace, and brings us out of all our diſtreſſes. Humane help oft-times is unconſtant and uncertain in the event. Men oft-times will not, oft-times cannot help, not the Warrier to Victory, or Magiſtrate to Right and Juſtice, becauſe overpowered by the number of enemies or offenders, and commonly fail, when we ſtand in greateſt neceſſity thereof: *Vain is the help of Man*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; weak is their help. *All the Nations of the Earth, are but as the drop of a Bucket, and the ſmall duſt of the ballance*, Iſa. 40. 15. God threatneth the Helpers of *Egypt*, that they ſhould all be deſtroyed, *Ezek.* 30. 8. and lie down in the grave with the uncircumciſed, *cap.* 32. 21. Ethiopia *and* Egypt *were* No's *ſtrength, and it was infinite*, Put *and* Lubim *her helpers, yet ſhe was carried away into captivity*, Nahum 3. 9. *The Egyptians themſelves were Men, and not God, and their Horſes fleſh and not ſpirit; when the Lord ſtretcheth out his hand,*

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both he that helpeth ſhall fall, and he that is holpen ſhall fall down, and they all ſhall fail together, Iſa. 31. 3. But God is a ſure and impregnable Rock to his People. In fine, all humane help, as it is but arbitrary, (depending on the will of God, the higheſt cauſe of all things) ſo it is but temporary. Men and friends may ſtand by us, and help us till death, but they are mortal as well as we, and when either die, we are out of the reach of their help: A gulf is then fixed between us. None can redeem his Brother, no more than deliver his own ſoul from the hand of the grave, *Pſal.* 49. 7. But God is our God even to death, yea in, and after death, even to all eternity, will never fail or forſake us, but guide us by his counſel, till he receives us to his glory.

And ſo I have finiſhed the firſt general part of the Text, the comfortable propoſition or concluſion. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help.*

A word or two of the ſecond general part, and ſo I ſhall cloſe all with ſome branches of practical application; which is the further explication or confirmation of the aſſertion. In theſe words, *Whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* Wherein (to paſs the connection, which might give us this obſervation, *That he who would have God, or can juſtly challenge him for his help, muſt make him his hope.*

And alſo the order of the words, deſcribing a godly man, firſt by his faith in making God his help, and then by his hope, which notes to us the conjunction of, with, or the priority or precedency of the grace of faith unto that of hope, and

and of believing to expecting. Faith is the Mother, and Hope the Daughter; the ſoul firſt believes, and then hopes in the God of its ſalvation. In regard of the habit, as all other graces; ſo theſe are infuſed *ſimul & ſemel*, being but one and the ſame caſt of that ſeed of God, which abides in us: And alſo in reſpect of their working and operation, they go hand in hand, they are as ſo many links of the ſame chain, knots in the ſame garden, all concatenated and indiſſolubly twiſted together; yea faith and hope, above all other, are of neareſt alliance, and cloſeſt companions. Hope is to Faith *Fidus Achates*, its faithful and conſtant friend: yet notwithſtanding there is a priority of order, both as to their being and acting, though none of time, faith being the primitive grace, challenging the primogeniture in the ſoul, having both excellency of dignity, and of ſtrength: This tranſition of the Pſalmiſt only hints us the one to be *pediſſequam* to the other; where one goes before, the other follows, and faith is in the centre, hope in the circumference.

But paſſing this, I ſhall take notice only of the matter, and therein conſider theſe two particulars.

Firſt, The Saints character or deſcription: They are ſuch as hope in the Lord their God.

Secondly, The Saints charter of happineſs on that account, or their reward or remuneration; *Happy are they* — The firſt is the attribution of hope, as the diſtinguiſhing property, or peculiar ſpecification of Gods People in times of diſtreſs and affliction. And therein we have firſt, *ſpei exercitium*, the act or exerciſe of their hope.

Secondly, *Spei fundamentum*, the object, whereon their hope is founded, and whereby it is ſuſtained and ſupported. *The Lord their God.*

Firſt, The exerciſe of hope: That's the qualification of the perſons. And ſo we may obſerve, *Gods People are an hoping and expecting people, eſpecially in evil times is their hope fixed and engaged on God. Thou art my hope*, is their uſual language. Hope is the diſcriminating character of a Chriſtian. This the Saints have alwaies made profeſſion of, and incouraged themſelves unto in the worſt of times, *Pſal.* 71. 5. Saith *David*, *Thou art my hope, O Lord God.* So *Pſal.* 141. 8. *Mine eyes are to thee, O God the Lord, in thee is my truſt.* So the Church, *Lam.* 3. 26. *It is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.* It's the commendation of *Abraham*, the Father of the faithful, *that in hope he believed againſt hope*, Rom. 4. 18. Their ſouls depend wholly upon God, and their expectation is only from him. It's their differencing character from the wicked, who are men without hope, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. Now hope upon a moral account is nothing elſe, but a paſſion of the iraſcible appetite, about a future good, hard and difficult to be obtained, and yet poſſible, becauſe either promiſed, or proper to us. It's called future, to diſtinguiſh it from fruition, and alſo joy; *For what a man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Rom. 8. 24. Its object is alſo ſaid to be difficult, to diſtinguiſh it from deſire and anhelation, yet poſſible to oppoſe it to deſperation. Divine hope is no other than an aſſured looking for, and undoubted expectation of all promiſed good things to come, ſpiritual

ritual, temporal and eternal, on the account of Gods mercy, and Chriſts merits, and the outgoing of the ſoul towards thoſe apprehended goods. Fear is converſant about evil, but hope about good. And as it bears a ſpecial reſpect to eternal bleſſedneſs, life and ſalvation, ſo a ſubordinate and inferiour to all outward deliverances, mercies and comforts whatſoever. Faith conſiders things as true, hope as hard, though poſſible, charity as good. Faith looks at the word promiſing, hope at the thing promiſed. Faith and Patience properly reſpect afflictions, the one the ſtrength, the other the length of them; hope more ſtrictly the delation of mercies and bleſſings. The Saints often have little in hand, but they have much in hope. It's the Periphraſis of the Saints, ſuch as hope in the Lord. They truſt in him at all times, in a good day, a day of mercy, when their ſteps are anointed with butter and hony, while they eat the fineſt of the Wheat, and drink the pureſt blood of the Grape; and in the evil day, either of publick or private calamity, when God hedgeth up their waies with thorns, and writes bitter things againſt them; what time they are afraid, they truſt in him. They have *ſpem in imis*, and (though toſſed to and fro with the waves of ſorrow and diſcomfort) they can (with the wiſe Marriner) faſten the anchor of hope, both in the dark, and the deep, in the God of their ſalvation. They are alwaies cleaving to, and depending on God, addreſſing to him, waiting on, and expecting from him, looking and longing towards him; and though they want comfort and aſſurance, yet they alwaies nouriſh a ſecret hope, and

(though in a passion they may cry out, *Their hope is perished from the Lord*) yet as soon as the fit is over, they recollect themselves, and say, *Why are ye cast down, our souls hope in God, for we shall yet praise him.*

Secondly, The foundation of that hope is here expressed, *The Lord their God.* Where we must consider the appellation, *The Lord God*, and the relation, *The Lord their God.*

First, The appellation, *The Lord God, Deus est nomen essentiæ, Dominus potestatis*; the one is a name denoting substance, the other power and authority.

Hence observe first, *Though a Saint be never so happy in the influence of mercy, yet he still keeps an eye to, and maintains a reverential awe of divine Majesty*, Heb. 12. *ult. Having received a Kingdom, let us serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.* So, 1 Pet. 1. 17. *If we call him* (not Judge) but *Father, let us pass the time of our sojourning in fear.* God hath so tempered the discoveries of his greatness, with those of his goodness, as there is matter for filial fear in the highest exercises of our faith and confidence.

Secondly, Gods power and greatness is a great incouragement of his Peoples hope in him. Not only his grace and mercy, but his power and ability, is a stable prop of their faith and confidence. Outward greatness proves a disadvantage to the improvement of worldly interests, and makes men stand at a distance, but doth no way hinder or impeach, but rather help forward divine interests and accesses. Without an interest in God, indeed the most comfortable Attributes are terrible, but through that, the most terrible Attributes become comfortable. But

But to pass these; thirdly, Observe, *God, and God alone is the object of his Peoples hope in a day of affliction.* He is the confidence of the ends of the earth, *Psal.*65. 5. The Prophet stiles him expressly, and by way of emphasis, *The hope of Israel*, Jer. 14. 8. He is called, *The God of hope*, Rom. 15. 13. *objectivè* as well as *effectivè*. He is so in himself, and his People make him so. He is their hope *exclusivè*, solely. Their help stands only in his Name, *Tutius ad Deum meum quàm ad ullum Sanctorum, vel Angelorum*, saith *Austin*, I can go safelier to my God, than either to Saint or Angel. They know the vanity and emptiness of the creature, and the fulness and all-sufficiency of the Creatour, and therefore in his Name will they set up their banners. And he is their hope *signanter*, by way of eminency, a sufficient help; when there is no hope in the creature at the best, there is hope in God at the worst. A Saints case is never so desperate as on earth, but it's hopeful as to Heaven.

Now if we would know or inquire, what it is in God, that is the pillar of their hope, or the object of their confidence, take we an account of it, especially in these five particulars.

First, The glory of his Attributes. This was that he proclaimed before *Moses*, for his incouragement of him in the conduct of the people upon his earnest request, when his spirit began even to fail him, *Exod.* 34. 6, *The Lord God, merciful and gracious* — This Name of the Lord is a strong Tower — The consideration of his immutability, that he is a God who changeth not amidst all the changes, confusions and revolutions of this lower World, of his sufficiency, all power belonging to

him, *Pſal.* 62. 11. And above all, his never failing goodneſs and mercy, truth and faithfulneſs, is an invincible ſtay and ſupport to the Chriſtians hope. See holy *Jeremiah* bearing up himſelf with the meditation of his power, *Jer.* 32, 17, 18. Ah Lord God, *behold thou haſt made the Heaven and the Earth by thy great power, and ſtretched-out arm* — As he hath infinite wiſdom, and knows all things, ſo infinite power, and can do all things; he is wonderful in counſel, and mighty in working. And thus we finde the Church ſhoring up her reeling and ſinking ſpirits with the ſtud of his infinite, boundleſs, and never failing mercy and compaſſions, *Lam.* 3. 21. *This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.* Saints hope in his mercy, *Pſal.* 33. 18. The Attributes of God are as ſo many props and pillars to uphold a falling ſoul, as ſo many ſhields, which he may bear before him to fence off the ſtrokes of evil. When they cannot lay hold on a Promiſe, they may yet lay hold upon an Attribute; and though they ſit in darkneſs, and ſee no light, yet may they ſtay upon it. One ſhine of an Attribute in its full luſtre and glory, is able to diſpel in a moment all thoſe miſts of fear, doubt and temptation, which have over-ſpread the ſouls Heavens, and cauſe them utterly to vaniſh.

Secondly, The merits of his Son: They are alſo ſtrong pillars of this hope. He is that mighty one, on whoſe ſhoulders God hath laid his peoples help, *Pſal.* 89. 19. All fell and became a ruinous heap in *Adam*, but is repaired by Chriſt. *It hath pleaſed the Father all fulneſs ſhould dwell in him*, the ſpirit without meaſure, treaſures of wiſdom and

and knowledge. And all the grace and mercy of God runs through the chanel of his blood, whether concerning our eternal or temporal condition. He is the Saviour of all, but eſpecially of them that believe; with him we have all things, as being entailed upon him; all is yours, becauſe you are Chriſts, 1 *Cor.* 3. *ult.* Through the knowledge of him, all things are given us which pertain to life and godlineſs: God ſupplies all our wants according to the riches of his glory in Chriſt. He is repreſented to us under all poſſible names of fulneſs and excellency, to aſſure us, that whatſoever we want, may be had in him. He is called light, life, treaſure; yea the Apoſtle calls his unſearchable riches, *Epheſ.* 3.8. ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτον, unfathomable wealth. It's reported of the Spaniſh Embaſſadour, that when he had beheld the Duke of *Venice*'s treaſury with great admiration, as indeed being the richeſt in the world, yet in the end commends his Maſters above it, which the auditors wondring at, and demanding the reaſon of, he gives this anſwer, This treaſure, though vaſt, hath a bottom, but my Maſters hath no bottom, alluding to the Iſles of *Mexico*, &c. This is much more true of Chriſt; he hath bottomleſs treaſures of grace and peace, wiſdom and holineſs, joy and comfort, life and glory, bliſs and happineſs, to give out to his members. And (conſidering help in the other notion) he is alſo the moſt proper and adequate object of our hope. For him hath God exalted a Prince and Saviour, not only to diſpenſe out the gifts of repentance and forgiveneſs (as Kings do on their inauguration daies) but alſo hath raiſed him up to be

the σῶτης and deliverer of his People from the hands of all their enemies: The Redeemer that ſhall come out of Sion, to turn away ungodlineſs from *Jacob*. He ſhall raiſe the Tabernacle of *David* that is fallen, and cloſe up the breaches thereof, *Act.* 15. 16. He is called, Gods ſtrength, *Iſa.* 27. 5. *His neck* (ſaith the Spouſe in her deſcription) *is like the Tower of David, builded for an Armoury, whereon there hang a thouſand bucklers, all ſhields of mighty men, Cant.* 4. 4. He is the Saints chief helper, the *Anteſignanus* or ſtandard-bearer of the whole Army, or (as we render it) *the chiefeſt of ten thouſand*, under whoſe conduct himſelf going in the front before us, we may rout Armies of ſins, fears, temptations, men and Devils, though never ſo combined or bandied againſt us: Though they compaſs us about like Bees, yet in this name of the Lord may we deſtroy them. He is a ſecurity againſt the wrath of God, and againſt the violence of men alſo. Saith *Bernard* ſweetly, *ubi tuta firmaque requies niſi in vulneribus ſalvatoris?* Every wound of Chriſt is a City of Refuge to the purſued ſoul of a Chriſtian. The deſtroying Angel will paſs over thoſe who are ſprinkled with Chriſts blood: The avenger of blood ſhall never touch thoſe who are once lodged in this ſure Sanctuary; and they who have the ſcarlet thred of his merits tied upon their hearts, are certain of delivery from wrath to come, and being *proximi Jovi*, are yet *procul à fulmine*. *This man* (ſaith the Evangelical Prophet of him) *ſhall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary Land,*

Iſa.

Iſa. 32. 2. A ſhelter againſt colder and battering ſtorms, and a ſhadow under burning and ſcorching heats. *He comes forth* (ſaith the other Prophet) *that is to be Ruler in Iſrael, from among the leaſt of the thouſands of Judah, whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting. And he ſhall ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord, in the Majeſty of the name of the Lord his God. And this man ſhall be thy peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into the Land:* ſtrength againſt, or comfort under his oppreſſion. This was that the Prophet *Zachariah* comforts the Church with againſt the Babyloniſh captivity, *Zach.* 9. 9, 11, 12. *Rejoyce greatly, O Daughter of Sion— Behold thy King cometh unto thee*—And what follows upon his advent? *As for thee alſo, by the blood of the Covenant, I have ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit, wherein there is no water*; and ſo directs them to turn to him that ſtrong hold as priſoners of hope. Never failed that ſoul of help, who made Chriſt his hope. He never will caſt out thoſe which come to him, and *citius clavem ab Hercule*, none can pluck his ſheep out of his hand.

Thirdly, The relations of the Covenant. Whom ſhould a child truſt to for help but his Father, and the innocent for right but the Judge? This is that the Prophet pleads all along in times of calamity and trouble, Gods Paternity, Kingſhip, conjugal relations, The Church alwaies goes to him under theſe relations of a God, a Judge, a King, a Father, an Husband, all which are moving his bowels of affection; ſhe laies her claim to God as hers on all occaſions. *I am thine*, ſaith *David*, *ſave me.* So the Church impleads her intereſt. *The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The truth and fulneſs of his Promiſes. What God hath a tongue to ſpeak, is our duty to have an ear to hear, and heart too to believe, for what he hath ſpoken with his mouth he will fulfil with his hand, 2 *Sam.* 7. 24, 25. Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you: *Joſhua* tells the people, *cap.* 23. 14. And ſo *Solomon* bleſſing God before the people, thus beſpeaks them; *there hath not failed one word of all his good promiſe*, 1 King. 8. 56. All his Promiſes are Yea and Amen, made in Chriſt, and confirmed, and made good by him. Now the Promiſes of mercy are ſure footing for our faith, and ſerve highly to fix and eſtabliſh our hope. *I had periſhed* (ſaith *David*) *in mine affliction, but that thy word was my hope*, Pſal. 119. This gave him comfort. So as he profeſſeth at the 114 *verſe*. *Thou art my hiding-place, and my ſhield: I hope in thy word.* And ſo emphatically again, *Pſal.* 130. 5. *I wait for the Lord, my ſoul doth wait: and in his word do I hope.* The Promiſes are as ſo many Magazines for relief, Mines for ſupply, Springs for conſolation, Breaſts for refreſhment: They are as the clefts of the Rock, and ſecret places of the ſtairs for the ſouls ſecurity and protection. They are as an anchor of hope, ſure and ſtedfaſt (as the Apoſtle elegantly calls them, *Heb.* 6. 19.) which if well faſtened, the ſhip is ſure; ſo that neither wind or wave can move it. There cannot be more venom in a judgement, than there is balm in a Promiſe. This was that bare up *Davids* ſoul, and Chriſt too whom he typifies, even Gods Promiſe of not leaving his ſoul in Hell, nor

nor ſuffering his holy one to ſee corruption, *Act.* 13. 35. This upheld *Jonas*'s ſpirit from ſinking under all his temptations and diſtractions, and his faith and hope from drowning, even when his body was ſwallowed up, he did not throw all over-board, but yet lookt towards his holy Temple, *Jonah* 2. 4. To which the Promiſes were peculiarly made. Though the gate of mercy ſeemed ſhut, all hopes of pardon cut off, mountains of oppoſition ſtood in the way of his faith, yet he looks up, and by faith over-looks all; faith in the Promiſe made him row againſt winde and tide, and bear againſt all the difficulties and diſaſters of providence, and hope not only againſt reaſon, but ſenſe too, and believe over not bare difficulties, but ſeeming impoſſibilities alſo. When *David* was driven out of all hopes of the Kingdom, ſo as peremptorily to conclude he was caſt out of Gods ſight, ſhould fall by the hand of *Saul*, and all God had ſaid was but a ſtory, and his Prophet *Samuel* a tale, a lie; he recovers himſelf from under all theſe wreſtlings, and animates his ſoul by the remembrance of the Promiſe; *I had fainted but that I believed, to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* Though God does not alwaies fulfill his threatnings, but revokes them on repentance (wherefore the Jews counted not him a falſe Prophet that foretold Judgements, though they came not to paſs) yet he alwaies fulfils his Promiſes to them that fear him, and hope in his mercy. This ſtaid *Abrahams* faith therefore under all apparent contradictions, *Rom.* 4. 21. He that promiſed would perform.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *Exemplaria Providentiæ.* The experiments of his Providence are another ſure ground and bottom of hope. Experience is the breeder of Hope, *Rom.* 5 4. They which have tried God, cannot but truſt him, *For the Lord will not forſake his People.* This was the ground of *Davids* confidence, 1 *Sam.* 13. 37. when he went out againſt huge *Goliah. The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtine*; one deliverance aſſures another. And it is no leſs the Argument of his Prayer in ſeveral Pſalms, *Pſal.* 27. 9. *Thou haſt been my help, leave me not, neither forſake me, O God of my ſalvation.* Thou haſt, O Lord, taken the care of me hitherto, expoſe me not now as a deſtitute Orphan to the wide world, Pſal 31 2, 3. *Be thou my ſtrong rock, for thou art my rock and my fortreſs.* Pſal. 42. 8, 9. *All thy waves and billows are gone over me, yet the Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time— I will ſay unto God, my rock —* when he was almoſt ſunk, even about drowning, he catcheth hold on the bough of former experience ſeaſonably and opportunely, and ſo ſaves himſelf. So *Pſal.* 71. 5, 9. *Thou art my hope from my youth— caſt me not off in the time of my old age.* So *verſ.* 17, 19. *Thou haſt taught me O God from my youth, now alſo, when I am old and gray-headed, O God forſake me not.* There's his Prayer; and ſee how his Faith gets up, and riſes ſtill higher and higher, from hope to aſſurance, *verſe* 20. *Thou which haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken me again, and ſhalt bring me up again from the depths of the Earth—* And as he ends the Pſalm, ſo he begins it. *Verſe*

1, 2, 3.

1, 2, 3. *In thee O Lord, I put my truſt, let me never be put to confuſion— be thou my ſtrong rock and habitation— for thou art my rock and my fortreſſe.* When the Out-works are taken, then he retreats to the principal Fort: when a Chriſtians preſent evidences are darkened, or hopes diſcouraged, he may and ought to fly to the experience of Gods former gracious dealings, and comfortable manifeſtations; to look back to the days of old, and years of ancient times, and call to remembrance his former Songs under his preſent ſufferings. Theſe will bear him up as in the dayes of old upon Eagles wings. I was under ſuch a temptation, but the Lord ſtrengthened me, under ſuch an affliction, but God delivered me. Thus *David*, Pſal. 28. 7. *The Lord is my ſtrength, and my ſhield, my heart truſted in him, and I am helped:* He goes to God by a Periphraſis, *Pſal.* 17. 7. *Shew thy marvelous loving-kindneſs, O thou that ſaveſt by thy right hand them which put their truſt in thee—* And thus the Church, *Pſal.* 22. and 44. *Our Fathers truſted in thee— We have heard what thou didſt for our Fathers in the dayes of old. And ſhall not the Fathers unto the Children praiſe thy truth?* So Pſal. 115. 12. *The Lord hath been mindfull of us, he will bleſs us —* S. Pſal. 74. 12. *God is my King of old: Thou didſt divide the Sea by thy ſtrength, thou brakeſt the heads of the Dragons in the waters, Thou brakeſt the heads of Leviathan in pieces — Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord— Art not thou it, that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon—* It's all along obſervable how the Church and People of God have ſtood upon this Giants ſhoulder of former experience in their pleadings

pleadings and wreſtlings with him for future mercies. And in an eſpecial manner thoſe two ſolemn and ſignal deliverances, out of *Egypt*, and from the red Sea: as God makes them a conſtant argument for obedience to him, ſo do they of confidence upon him. And thus the Church in the *Lamentations*, in the ſaddeſt dumps of her affliction, recurrs to her experience, *Lam.* 3. 26. *It's good a man ſhould both quietly hope, and wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.* Thus the Apoſtle argues againſt wants and neceſſities, *Hebr.* 13. 5. from the Promiſe. And againſt dangers from the experiments of Providence. *So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord is our helper:* And ſo he reaſons againſt oppoſitions and perſecutions. 2 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. *I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion, and the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work*— Former experiments (like herbs diſtilled in Summer which comfort the heart in the dead of winter) may ſerve to juſtifie, yea to fortifie future expectances. It's good reckoning (though not from falſe and deceitfull man,) yet from the true and everliving God, what he hath been, that he will be to his People: He that hath delivered their ſouls from death, will deliver their eyes from tears, and their feet from falling; he that hath delivered, doth, and will deliver (as the Apoſtle concludes) even when perſecutions brake his back, comforting himſelf with this, they ſhould not break his neck, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. but God would make a way of eſcape. And ſo much for the Appellation, *The Lord God*—

Secondly, Follows the appropriation, or application of this to our ſelves. *The Lord his God*—

Our

Our God. Intereſt in God is the only ſure ground of hope in him. 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. *David encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.* Pſal. 60. 4. *Thou haſt given a banner to them that fear thee.* The Signs of Gods favour and preſence, the aſſurances of victory and triumph are the Saints peculiar. God proclaims warr againſt the wicked: *No peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* God will not caſt away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers; he will never take the wicked by the hand. His people only are the objects of his care and help in an evil day, as of his love and favour in a good. When *he roars out of* Sion, *and utters his voice from* Jeruſalem, *and the Heavens and Earth ſhake, he will then be the hope of his people, and the ſtrength of the children of Iſrael,* Joel 3. 16. a place of repair to, and harbour for them in the worſt of times, as the word imports. An Hypocrite hath no ſuch hope. *The ſinners of* Sion *are afraid, fearfulneſs ſurprizeth the Hypocrites:* They cannot dwell with devouring fire, or endure everlaſting burnings, *Iſa.* 33. 14. As 'tis the Saints duty, ſo 'tis their only Priviledge to hope. *God, even our own God ſhall bleſs us,* Pſal. 67. 6. Appropriation is the ground of Benediction: *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him;* intereſt is the foundation of expectation. It was the obſervation of *Luther*, A Chriſtians duty lies much in Adverbs, his comfort much in Pronouns. The Ship that is moſt richly laden with holineſs, alwayes may bear the faireſt Sails of confidence. Wicked men may be carnally confident, and ſeem to truſt in God, but all is but a pretence; they carry the faireſt ſide outward, and may have fair

weather

weather in their faces, while a dreadfull ſtorm in their Conſciences. They may preſume, but cannot believe, may lie to God, but cannot relie upon him. They who obey not Precepts, can never rightly hope in Promiſes, for where Faith is in the centre, Obedience will be in the circumference. Sin daſhes a mans hopes, and guilt enfeebles his ſpirit. That of *Auſtin* may be applyed here, *Non bene creditur ubi non bene vivitur.* The flagg of Confidence that hangs outward in his countenance, is but a bare empty ſign, without an approved licence of holineſs, and will not allow him a drop of the wine of true Conſolation.

But ſo much for the firſt particular, the exerciſe of the Saints Hope, with its proper Object, *the Lord their God.* Now follows,

Laſtly, *Præmium*, the reward and retribution of this their hope, *Happy are they*: For the predicate of Happineſs referrs to both Clauſes; Happy is he to whom God affords help, and happy he that makes him his Help, by truſting to, and hoping in him, — *Whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* This is the ordinary Language of Sacred Writt, Pſal. 2. 12. *Bleſſed are all they that truſt in him.* Pſal. 34. 8. *Bleſſed is the man that truſts in him.* Pſal. 84. 12, *&c.* And as *David* the Father, ſo *Solomon* the Son, that Maſter of the Sentences, affirms it, *Prov.* 16. 20. *Whoſo truſteth in the Lord, happy is he:* and ſo the Prophets aſſent this beatitude, which hope in God introduceth: Iſa. 30. 18. *Bleſſed are all they that wait for him*; and *Jer.* 17. 7. *Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is.*

Now this bleſſedneſs of the Soul by reaſon of its

its hoping in God will appear (not to name many things) and be evident upon this threefold accompt. As it is a preſerver of the Soul from ſin, under trouble, as it is an antidote againſt, or relief to the ſoul under trouble, and as it carries with it an aſſurance of deliverance and ſalvation out of trouble. Firſt, Under trouble it ſecures the ſoul from ſinning againſt God. That is the great matter of the godly's fear in time of ſtraits and afflictions, leſt they ſhould ſin againſt God: *Nil timeo*, ſaid *Chryſoſtom* to the Empereſs *Eudoxia* threatning of him, *niſi peccatum*. They fear to ſin by farr more than to ſuffer. Now (as a Mudd-wall choaks all the Cannon-bullets and Granado's ſhot againſt it, ſo do's this grace of Hope quench all the fiery darts of temptation. It's that preparation of the Goſpel of Peace, with which the Soul being well ſhodd, may walk over thorns and briars, and tread the Lion and Adder under his feet.

There are three evils eſpecially to which a gracious Soul is liable under the burden and preſſure of afflictions: Dedolency and deſpair under them, Diſcontent and impatience at them, or uſe of indirect and unlawfull Means to get out of them, and theſe neceſſarily follow one another. Hope is a remedy againſt all.

Firſt, Againſt male-content under trouble: It quiets, contents, and ſettles the Soul, and keeps it from murmuring and repining. This the Church found, *Lam.* 3. 29. *She put her mouth in the duſt, if ſo be there might be hope.* They are deſperate wretches, who open their mouths wide, and blaſpheme God by reaſon of the Plagues, *Revel.*

16. 21. Even the Devils blaſphemy ariſeth from their deſperacy. 'Twas the Atheiſtical King that would wait on the Lord no longer, 1 *King.* 6. *ult.* Hope waits untill the Lord is gracious, is dumb, and hath not a word to ſay againſt his doings. A deſperate Traitor curſes his Prince, but a penitent Malefactor, who hath the leaſt hope of pardon, willingly ſubmits to his ſentence. Indeed hope of mercy is a main ingredient in true repentance, and raiſeth it from Legal to Evangelical, when a Soul ſorrows towards God, mourns looking on him pierced for as well as by him; and puts the rope about his neck, and ſackcloth about his loyns, in his approaches to the King of Heaven, becauſe he is a merciſull King.

Secondly, It keeps from deſpondency and utter ſuccumbency under affliction. It hath *vim ſuſtentantem*, a ſuſtaining power in it; bears a man up againſt his Infirmities; it keeps the Soul from fainting or ſinking: It's like the Cork of the Net, which keeps it up, when the Lead of Fear would pull it down, or the wing of the Bird, that mounts it to Heaven, while the ſtone tied to the legg forces it down to earth: But for Hope the heart would break: Now though mercy deferred may make the heart ſick, yet the deſire coming is a tree of life, *Prov.* 13. 12. Good hope and conſolation are like *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, commonly in conjunction. The Palm-trees motto is Hopes, *Depreſſa Reſurgo.* Believing is a choice and ſingular Cordial, to preſerve the Soul from fainting.

Thirdly, From any unlawfull courſe to get out of affliction. *He that believes, makes not haſte*, Iſa. 28. 16.

28. 16. He will not leap over hedge and ditch, or finde any back-doors of eſcape, but wait till God opens a way of deliverance. The Souldier (though beſieged never ſo cloſe) will not deliver up the City, if he hath any hope of relief. The men of *Jabeſh* were glad when *Sauls* meſſengers came and told them, *To morrow by that time the Sun was hot they ſhould have help*, 1 Sam. 11. 9. Be the caſe never ſo ſad, the Soul will wait for Gods help, ſo long as it apprehends it ſelf not deſperate. Hope is not too haſty for or greedy of mercy, nor will not pluck the fruit thereof too ſoon, before it be full ripe. The patient (though brought never ſo low,) if in the hands of a wiſe Phyſician, ſtill hopes to recover, and is content, as knowing, the more deſperate and tedious his ſickneſs, the more will the joy be of his cure. The Captain though beaten by the Enemy, will by no means yield and take quarter, ſo long as he ſees any probability of fighting him; he is pleaſed with theſe thoughts, the ſharper the encounter, once overcome, the greater glory of the victory. The Chriſtian knows Gods time is the beſt, and therefore is willing to attend it, and will not himſelf make his way out of trouble, but find it made by Gods hand for him; he will not pluck a prick out of his foot, to put it into his heart, but had rather carry about him a wounded skin or torn eſtate than a wounded Conſcience; rather chooſe to endure trouble which tends to eaſe, than get a little eaſe at preſent, which leads to, and will end in trouble. He dare not ſhackle his Spirit to diſcharge his Body, but had rather be a Priſoner, and for this hope bound

with a chain, than a Free-man without it. *David*, although heir apparent of the Kingdom by Gods Promiſe, and in great danger of miſſing it by *Sauls* violence, yet dare not make more haſte than good ſpeed, by making his death a ſtirrup to aſcend the Throne by; nay, though he had opportunity, dare not take off his head for deſtruction, though for his conviction he cut off the lap of his garment; and that was *animo renitente* too; but rather waited Gods time of his advance to it, and ſettlement in it. The Primitive Chriſtians did not only, not ſeek or offer themſelves to a compoſition; no, but would not accept of deliverance on unworthy terms, *Heb.* 11. 35. That's the firſt. Hope ſecures againſt ſin.

Secondly, It doth admirably remedy affliction by ſanctifying and ſweetning of it. To name no more, it hath a four-fold energy in time of affliction, each of which hath a wonderful tendency towards the ſouls bleſſedneſs.

Firſt, *Vim quieſcentem*, a calming and quieting vertue; it ſtills and ſedates the ſoul, and does *motos componere fluctus*. The ſoul is ſtill, when it once knows it is God, and his hand, and is no more diſquieted, *Pſal.* 43. *ult.* It's filled with his peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding, *& tranquillo Deo, tranquillant omnia, & ipſum quietum aſpicere eſt quieſcere:* It gives not God an ill word, but holds its peace; nay, gives good words, bleſſeth his name, and ſaith, *Good is the Word of the Lord*; as *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25. *If I ſhall finde favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both the Ark and his habitation. But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee: Behold,*

here

here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him. It's reported of a precious ſtone called *Buſonites*, that caſt it into the Sea, and although it be never ſo tempeſtuous, it will procure a calm. This precious grace is hope, which calms and ſettles the ſoul under its greateſt tumults and commotions, and ſtaies it under its moſt reſtleſs inquietations. The *Rabbins* tell us, that all the letters in the name *Jehovah*, are *literæ quieſcentes*. Faith and hope can perfectly ſpell this his reverend name, and out of every letter thereof gather a quickening lecture influential on the Chriſtian to compoſe him into a ſerene temper under the greateſt ruffles and diſcompoſures he meets with in the world. This lower Region is ſubject to ſtorms and tempeſts, but the upper Region is ſerene and clear, no ſtorms above the Moon; and Hiſtorians report, that they which are at the top of the Alps can behold great ſhowres fall underneath them, but not a drop above or upon them. Hope mounts the ſoul up to God, advanceth it to Heaven, and then 'tis out of the dint of every ſtorm, and reach of every tempeſt whatſoever.

Secondly, It hath *vim ſublevantem*, a ſupporting and ſuſtaining vertue. Faith and hope are (like *Jachim* and *Boaz*, the Pillars of *Solomons*) the ſupport of the ſouls Temple. They are not only kept in perfect peace, but ſecurely too, whoſe minds are ſtayed on him, *Iſa.* 26. 3, 4. —*The fear of man brings a ſnare, but whoſo truſteth in the Lord ſhall be ſafe*, Prov. 29. 25. He that confides in God, dwells in his holy mountain, *Iſa.* 57. 13. Is as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed. Mole-hills may be ſcattered, but Moun-

tains are immoveable. *God is a buckler* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *to all that truſt in him*, Pſal. 18. 30. The ſoul can never be caſt down that hath hope to lift it up. No ſooner *Davids* ſpirit and countenance under a dejection, but hope gives it an erection and elevation. A ſecret hope will bear up the ſoul under the ſoreſt trials and temptations, even though preſſed down above meaſure, ſo as to deſpair of life, yet this Pillar will ſhore it up from tottering and falling; as it did *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 7, 8, 9.

Thirdly, *Vim conſolantem*, a comforting power. It will not only quiet the ſoul, make it ſtand ſtill, and ſee the Lords ſalvation, and cauſe it to glorifie God in the fires, but rejoyce it alſo, give it muſick upon the waters, alwaies moſt raviſhing, *Rom.* 15. 13. *The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* The Prophet having pronounced the bleſſedneſs of hoping in God, *Jer.* 17. 8. illuſtrates it by the metaphor of Palms, or Lawrels, Myrtles and Olive-trees, which retain their greenneſs, and endure under the ſcorching heats of the Sun, and are alwaies flouriſhing and proſperous. God is a Sun for conſolation, as well as a ſhield for protection to them that truſt in him. *Davids* heart was glad, and his glory rejoyced, while his fleſh did reſt in hope, *Pſal.* 16. 9. The flower of comfort grows on the tree of hope.

Fourthly, *Vim confirmantem*, an eſtabliſhing vertue: That fixes the ſoul on God, ſo as it does like a meteor hover in the air of uncertainties, but wholly acquieſces in him as his entire and reſolute dependant,

dependant, under all emergencies of providence, *Pſal.* 112. 7, 8. *His heart is fixed truſting in the Lord, his heart is eſtabliſhed*— Believing eſtabliſheth the ſoul, and keeps it, as from ſinful compliances, ſo from unworthy deſpondencies, and doubting fluctuations, that it doth not reel to and fro like an houſe that wants a ſolid foundation, but is like the City of *Venice*, which (though it ſtands on the very Sea) *nec fluctu, nec flatu movetur*, neither wind nor wave doth move it; neither is like the Willow ſhaken with every wind, but like the Oak, that abides its place in ſtorms and tempeſts. Hope in the Lord, is the anchor that faſtens the ſhip of the ſoul, ſo as it remains unſhaken and immoveable amidſt all the ſhakings of Satanical temptations, or worldly concuſſions. *I have ſet the Lord alwaies before me: becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved.* The true Believer is τετράγωνος ἀνήρ, like a die, caſt him which way you will, he falls upon a ſquare. The Earth may remove off its foundation, and the Mountains be hurled from their place, the Sea roar, and its waters be troubled, and yet the Church not be moved. Though weak in themſelves, believers are ſtrong in the Lord; and like the Boat (though wavering of it ſelf) yet tied to the Ship, it's ſure: Or like the Vine, Ivie, and Apricock, though ſome of the weakeſt of trees, yet leaning on the wall, and twining about the Oak, they ſtand firm and immoveable. A carnal man, or hypocrite, in time of diſtreſs, is ſoon moved, yea removed off his principles and profeſſion, like a door that goes on its hinges, in a ſpiritual ſtorm, he becomes the ſport of every

wind and wave, but a believer gets up on God that impregnable Rock; and being *homo quadratus*, having his foot ſet for all aſſaies, bonds and afflictions, do not unhinge or unſettle him; nay, like a *Paul*, none of theſe things move him, *Act.* 20. 24. Faith upholds the ſoul, holds the head up above water, and keeps a man from ſinking; yea, were he caſt into a Sea of troubles, by this bladder would he ſwim to ſhore, being put under him by the everlaſting Arm of Omnipotency. The hoping ſoul ſtaies himſelf upon the mighty God of *Jacob*, in truth and righteouſneſs; and though never ſo weak a creature in himſelf, and ſubject to fall, being ſupported by the ſtrong hand of invincible power, he ſtands firm and ſtedfaſt. Like the Spouſe coming out of the wilderneſs, and leaning upon the Arm of her Beloved, he reſts himſelf upon an Almighty Arm, ſo as 'tis infinitely eaſier to pluck the ſtrongeſt fabrick off its baſis and foundation, than to remove him off his hold on God his only ſtrength and ſupport; ſo that even the gates of Hell cannot prevail againſt him. Indeed the ſtrongeſt faith, and firmeſt hope may be exerciſed with variety of fears, doubts and temptations, but ſhall never be finally overcome: Perfect love ſhall in the end caſt out fear, and this aguiſh and ſhaking ſpirit of bondage (of which a Chriſtian hath yet alwaies two well daies for one ill) at length give place to the more ſtable ſpirit of Adoption. That's the ſecond.

Thirdly, It's a certain prognoſtick and infallible aſſurer of mercy and deliverance. The ſoul that hopes well, ſhall have well. The only way to have a mercy, is to believe it. According to our

our faith, ſo is it to us. A wavering ſoul muſt expect nothing, but a believing ſoul may expect any thing from the Lord. Never did any ſoul periſh in a way of believing. Hope, though it may ſometimes meet with a delay, yet it never meets with a diſappointment. It's the glory of hope, not to make aſhamed, *Rom.* 5. 5. They that wait on the Lord, never wait on him for nothing, but their expectations are crowned with anſwerable ſucceſſes. I dare challenge all the world to give but one inſtance of a ſoul that was failed by God while he truſted in him. All that depart from him ſhall periſh, and that turn aſide to crooked waies, be led forth with the workers of iniquity, but it's good to hold faſt to God. The end of faith is ſalvation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. Such as truſt in God may be relict ſometimes indeed, but ſhall never be left deſolate. They may be ſometime diſappointed, but never wholly deſtitute. The Pſalmiſt having acted his faith and hope in God, confidently demands and challenges deliverance, wilt not thou O God — give us help from trouble? *Pſal* 108. 12. Hope preſages mercy a coming. It laies a man under the Promiſe, and confirms his right and title to it. Now as a man, though he hath little in ready caſh, yet if a great deal in bills and bonds, is rich and wealthy: So the Chriſtian, though he hath never ſo little in hand, yet having all in hope and reverſion, is really bleſſed and happy. The Promiſe runs, *He that believes ſhall not be aſhamed.* And therefore it's very obſervable, that the Church in her petitions to God, begs for mercy proportionable to her hope, *Pſal.* 33. 22. *Let thy mercy (O Lord) be upon us, according*

according as we hope in thee. Hope prepares the ſoul for deliverance. Whatſoever is received, is received according to the capacity of the receiver. Now hope enlargeth the heart, biggens and ſwells the deſires, dilates and expatiates all the affections, that the ſoul is no longer a narrow-neck'd veſſel, which cannot receive the full infuſions of mercy, but opens its mouth wide, ſo as God fills it. Whatſoever ye ask believing, ye ſhall certainly receive. They who travel with a big expectation, commonly are delivered of a double bleſſing.

And finally, hope laies hold on Gods ſtrength, and engages him to ſave and deliver, even becauſe the ſoul truſts in him. So that the ſtate of a Believer, though never ſo ſad and diſconſolate, yet is never deſperate, but while he lives he may hope, yea, he lives, becauſe he doth hope. *For we are ſaved by hope*, ſaith the Apoſtle. The ſinner indeed may have a ſeemingly hopeful beginning, but he is ſure to meet with an hopeleſs, as well as to make a graceleſs end. His hope is like the Spiders web, when the beſome of death comes to give him his fatal ſweep, down goes his hope and himſelf together to Hells bottom. But *the godly hath hope in his end*, Jer. 31. 17. Though what he hopes for may be long a coming, yet long-lookt for ſhall come at laſt, and be doubly welcome. The greater the travel, and ſorer the labour, the fairer and ſtronger the birth. And the longer the fruit of mercy hangs on the Promiſe, the fuller and ſweeter ſhall it be, when it comes once to fall into his lap, and drop into his mouth. The proſperous gales of faith and hope ſhall ſend home the

the ſhip of his ſoul richly laden at laſt to the ſhore of Heaven, where he ſhall have a full fatiety of that happineſs of which he had here but a ſlender repaſt; and be inebriated with thoſe rivers of pleaſure that bubble up from the well head of eternity, whereof here he had a more imperfect taſte, and of whoſe ſweetneſs and fulneſs he was a longing and languiſhing expectant. To conclude with *David*, (with whom we began) he ſhall then behold Gods face in righteouſneſs, and be (abundantly and eternally) ſatisfied with his likeneſs.

And ſo much for the opening the leaves of the Text in its ſeveral doctrinal concluſions. Now what remains but to come and ſee, and taſte the fruit of this happineſs, in its proper and particular branches of Application. And the Text is not a barren and dry Tree, but like the Tree of life, bearing all manner of fruit; yea, its leaves good for the healing of ſouls. Though we muſt but top the outmoſt branches, *ipſa anal ĉta ſunt pretioſa*, the filings of this gold are precious. And in the firſt place, by way of Inference, we may deduce from the conſideration of the promiſed Truths, theſe three Corolaries.

Firſt, It preſents us with the different character and tranſcendent priviledge of the godly above all the world beſides. Here's a diſcovery,

Firſt, Of their different frame, temper and diſpoſition of ſpirit. They have not received the ſpirit of the world, but are men of another ſpirit; they hope in the Lord their God. As for the ungodly, it is not ſo; they are men without hope, either as 'tis a mercy, or a duty: they have no

God

God to hope in, neither do they hope in the God they pretend to have. They truſt in their wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their uncertain riches, inſtead of truſting in the alſufficient and ever-living God: When they increaſe, and he grows full-handed, he ſets his heart on them. As in a day of fulneſs, he bleſſeth himſelf in them, inſtead of the God of Truth, rejoycing in the fleſh of his own arm, and concluding he hath gotten his wealth by his own hand and power: ſo in a day of want and emptineſs he placeth all his ſtrength and confidence in them: He goes not to God, but creatures, for his help; not to the Lord, but to the Phyſitians, if he be ſick; not to the ſtore-houſe of divine Promiſes, but to the bag and granary, if he be in want; not to the great and ſoveraign Creator, but to his fellow-creatures, friends, relations, acquaintance, when once he comes to be forſaken; He leans on his houſe as the prop of his ſecurity. As in time of proſperity he offers ſacrifice to creature-enjoyments, ſaying, Theſe are the gods that have gone before us: ſo in time of affliction he bows down to them, and does them homage, crying out, Ariſe and ſave us. Is he under trouble of conſcience, it may be, with *Cain*, he goes to his muſick, his ſports and recreations, hoping to dill the obſtreperous noiſe of his own conſcience in the croud of outward enjoyments, or to ſmother its clamorous voice in the tumult of his own diſordered affections. In time of outward perplexity, he flies to means, inſtruments, and ſecond cauſes, it may be to unlawful and indirect courſes, as *Saul* to a Witch, and *Judas* to a rope; becauſe there is

not

not a God in *Iſrael*, he goes to *Baalzebub* the God of *Ekron*. *Aſhur* (he ſaies) ſhall ſave us, and we will go down to *Egypt*, and ride on horſes. Like thoſe deſperate and diſtracted wretches, *Iſa.* 8. 19, — 21. They went to their Arts of Necromancy, inſtead of the Living God, to Wizzards, Peepers, Mutterers, and ſuch as had familiar ſpirits: And being hardly beſted and hungry, fretted themſelves, and curſed their King, and their God, and lookt upward: When reduced to a ſtate of neceſſity or diſtreſs, they grew ſo impatient, that like men in a phrenſie, or in ſhipwrack, or people ſtarved in a ſiege, or a woman in the ſore pangs of her travel, they make hideous out-cries, and in this forlorn, diſtreſſed, and diſtracted condition, are like people deſperate, and at their wits ends, knowing not whither to run, or what to do, or what courſe in the world to take, and inſtead of an holy ſilence, and gracious poſſeſſion of their ſouls in patience under the load of their afflictions, like a boiling-pot, they ſend forth nothing but ſcum and filth; or a burning mountain, evaporate continually the flames of their paſſion, and flaſhes of their indignation, in curſed and direful blaſphemies both againſt God and inſtruments, Heaven and Earth together. So deſperate a caſe is every wicked man in in a diſtreſſed condition. And when death once comes and looks him in the face, then either he pleaſes himſelf with a falſe hope, and blind preſumption, which ends in death, founded on Gods mercy, Chriſts ſufferings, common grace, outward calling and profeſſion, immunity from ſome groſs ſins, performance of ſome external duties of the firſt or

ſecond

ſecond Table, or ſome ſuch like grounds (all too rotten and ſandy a foundation to build the ſtreſs of an immortal ſoul on for eternity) or elſe he becomes deſperate and hopeleſs. This is the genuine temper of every ungodly perſon. But now on the contrary, what is the genius of a true Chriſtian? He truſts and hopes in God, and in God alone. God is his ſong and his ſalvation, *Iſa.* 12.2. He truſts in Gods mercy, and his heart rejoyceth in his ſalvation, *Pſal.* 13. 5. In a good day, when he receives moſt from God, he attributes and aſcribes moſt, nay all to him. The hand of our God is upon us for good. Thou haſt given me power to get wealth — Yea, when he enjoyes moſt of God, he ſtill depends moſt on God: when he is ſurrounded with creature-comforts, and compaſſed with outward mercies even on every ſide, Gods Candle ſhines on his Tabernacle, his Mountain made moſt ſtrong, the lines fallen to him in pleaſant places, he waſheth his garments in Wine, and his cloaths in the blood of Grapes, yet he looks over and above all creatures as inſignificant cyphers, empty cyſterns, inſufficient ſupports and comforts, to the Rock of *Jacob*, and hope of *Iſrael*, truſting and confiding in him alone in his utmoſt weal, as well as in his greateſt want and woe, which is the moſt high, generous, and refined act of faith. Thus we finde holy *David*, when he had taken a ſurvey of the graſpings, gripings, and hoardings of the factors of this world, and of all their heaps and banks, he turns from them with an holy ſcorn, or rather zealous indignation, in the due aſcent of his heart to God, and anhelations after him, *Pſal.* 39. 7. *And now Lord,*

Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. And ſo in an evil day, a day of adverſity, when, though a child of light, he walks in darkneſs, God follows him with breach upon breach, all his waves compaſs him, and his billows go over his ſoul, while his arrows ſtick faſt in his fleſh, and his hand preſſeth him very ſore; while he ſows ſackcloth on his skin, and defiles his horn in the duſt: When all the ſongs of Sion are at an end, and he hath none but the ſad and mournful ditties left him of lamentation and woe; the joy of his heart is ceaſed, and he weeps ſore in the night, and hath none to comfort him; all his mercies, yea and his hopes are gone too, and periſhed from the Lord, and for peace he hath great bitterneſs; yet then he mounts up (as on Eagles wings) by fiducial acts to Heaven, and ſaith, Lord, though I know not what to do, yet mine eyes are towards thee. He ſtill remembers the years of the right hand of the moſt High. He may meet with diſtreſs, but never fall into diſtraction; perplexity, but not paſſion or perturbations. Though he be troubled on every ſide, yet he is not diſtreſſed, though perplexed, yet not in deſpair, though perſecuted, yet not forſaken, though caſt down, yet not deſtroyed; as the Apoſtle triumphs, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8. — He may be at his wits end, but never at his faiths end. Though his faith wants wings to flie, yet it hath a foot to go, or at leaſt a knee to creep. He yet dwells in the ſecret of the moſt High, though he hath no corner to lay his head in here below, he caſts his burden upon the Lord, when he findes his own ſhoulders too weak to bear under it, and commits his way to him,

to

to bring it for him to paſs, when ſo dark and intricate as he cannot finde the leaſt path out of it: He caſts his care on him, who taketh care for him. That's the firſt.

Secondly, And as this gives us an account of the different temper, ſo likewiſe of the different happineſs of the Saints above all the world beſides. He not only hopes in the Lord, but hath the God of *Jacob* for his help. While we ſtand on the turret of this comfortable doctrine, and take a *Piſgah*-view of the godly's felicity, we may cry out of them, as *Baalam* ſtanding upon Mount *Peor* once did of *Iſrael. How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Iſrael!* O thrice happy and unſpeakably bleſſed ſouls that have this intereſt in God. Happy are they indeed, who are in ſuch a caſe. There are four choice priviledges which flow from the ſouls intereſt in God, each whereof is an Herauld to proclaim to all the world his felicity.

Firſt, holy peace and ſerenity, tranquillity, acquieſcence and ſatisfaction. *I will lay me down in peace, and ſleep, becauſe thou (O Lord) only keepeſt me in ſafety.* There may be trouble and turmoil abroad, but alwaies peace at home; ſtorms without, but a calm within. The peace of God is the Chriſtians Life-guard. *In the world they may have tribulation, but in him they have peace,* John 16. *ult.* ——

Secondly, A grounded certainty as to enjoyments; for God never diſappoints them who truſt in him. The mercies he gives his People, (though ſlow in coming) are ſure mercies; *The ſure mercies of David.* The Covenant he hath made

made is everlasting and sure. The promise both of Spirituals and Temporals being of Faith is sure to the seed, *Rom.* 4. 16. It was part of *Moses* blessing, *Deut.* 33. 28. *Israel shall dwell in safety alone, the fountain of* Jacob *shall be on a Land of Corn and Wine: also his Heavens shall drop down dew.*

Thirdly, An undoubted security. As certainty of mercies, so security from evils and mischiefs is their portion. They are secure from Treachery at home, for no fear of Apostacy to him who hath God as his Help: He shall overcome, and be made a Pillar in the House of his God, *Revel.* 3. 12. And secure from Forcign Violence. For if God be on his side, who dare engage on the contrary? He may sing with *David* in that heavenly Canticle of his, *The Lord is my light, and salvation, whom shall I fear? I will not fear what man can do unto me; No, not of ten thousand which have round beset me.* God is a sure defence to his people; *Benjamin the beloved of the Lord shall dwell between his shoulders*, Deut. 33. 12. The Enemy may thrust sore at him (as a man against an House side) but the Lord helps him, *Psal.* 118. 13. Gods protection is a Pillar to shore him up under every blast of the adversary to overturn him. A Saint being inchanted (as I may so speak) with the Name of the God of *Jacob*, is shot-free, secure from gun-shot, out of the reach of all dangers, enemies, evils, and afflictions whatever.

Fourthly, Supply or sufficiency, *Prov.* 28. 5. *He that trusteth in the Lord, shall be made fat.* He that hath God, hath all in him engaged for his good. *Son, I am thine, and all I have is thine;*

ſaith God to his Children. What power, wiſdom, mercy, or any other excellency is in God, is active for his peoples good; yea all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, are at their command and ſervice. And we may well cloſe this Uſe with that of *Bernard*, *Si Deus tam bonus quærentibus, quam bonus fruentibus?* If God be ſo good to them that now ſeek him, what is he to them that finde him? If ſo ſweet to Hope, what to Fruition? This conſideration ſhould make us cry out with *Auſtin*, *Feciſti nos Domine, ad te, & non requietum eſt cor noſtrum, donec requieſcat in te.* Lord, Thou haſt made us for thy ſelf, and our hearts can never reſt till we come to reſt in the full enjoyment of thee.

Now becauſe this Happineſs of the Saints ſtands in contradiſtinction, or rather in contradiction to the infelicity of ſinners; As the doctrin puts a cup of Conſolation into the hand of the godly, ſo of Trembling into the hands of the wicked; beſpeaks by way of terror, and convinceth of the ſad miſery, and grand unhappineſs of all that want, and are ſtrangers to an Intereſt in God. In a good day they have no ground of comfort, and in an evil, no aſſurance of help. That's the ſecond practical Inference.

If they be happy who have this title to God, and bleſſed, certainly they muſt needs be curſed and miſerable that are without it, unleſs they had any thing equivalent with it, which is impoſſible. O ſad and dreadful condition, to be at once both hopeleſs and helpleſs: This is the utmoſt aggravation of unhappineſs, the deſperate condition of the Devils and damned in Hell. Such as are without

out God, are without hope, yea without both hope and help. And ſhould a man ſpeak a thouſand words, he could not more fully expreſs the diſmal complexion of any ſtate, than is done in this one, *To be hopeleſs.*

The wicked have no Heaven hereafter, no hope here An ungodly man may run and read his condition in the glaſs of this point, who hath no God to go to, he hath not the leaſt ground or colour of hope, but continually occaſion of fear, and perpetual cauſe of terror. He hath no juſt hope in the day of Mercy, and that's ſad enough, much leſs in the day of miſery, and that's worſe. His defence is departed from him, the Lord being not with him, and he is bread for the teeth of every Judgement, as *Joſhua* told them of the Nations they were to invade, *Numb.* 14. 9. In the day of abounding of all Creature-comforts, a carnal man can have no content or ſatisfaction: One thought of his diſtance from God will ſufficiently imbitter all his Cups of pleaſure, ſo as they ſhall be no other than waters of *Marah* to him. Under the tydes of external Joy his heart is ſorrowfull, and his brighteſt Sun of outward felicity hath ſad reflections, eſpecially if the Clock of Conſcience anſwers the Diall of the Word, and amidſt his light riſeth to him thick darkneſs, or gathers upon him. His heart is black as an Oven within, while the Corn, Wine and Oyle, makes his face ſhine without. As a Childe of God often carries the light of a rejoycing Soul in the dark Lanthorn of a ſoiled and withered face, ſo do's the ſinner oft diſguiſe a ſad heart with a cheerfull and ſmiling countenance. Neither can he expect any ſuc-

cour or relief, either from within, or from without in the day of affliction. As fear of losing eats up all his comfort and content in enjoying, so forfeiture of title makes his lost Soul eternally despair of a recovery and repossession. I wonder on what acquaintance the sinner can challenge any interest, or pretend to any hope in God, or what possible should be the ground-work and foundation of his professed, but mistaken confidence? He may build Castles in the Air, and make to himself a refuge of lies, please himself with conceits and fancies of supposed and imaginary happiness, but they will prove meer delusions in the end. As his confidence is a lie in the foundation, so it will be in the event, *Isa.* 28. Gods wrath is all this time smoaking against him, and will break forth in fiery flames of indignation, while he promiseth himself peace in the walks of the imagination of his own heart, *Deut.* 29. 19. If God once forsakes him, all the world cannot help or relieve him: Neither any of the Persons, nor all the things of the World can give him comfort. If the Lord helps not, who can help? The world usually deceives her Confidents. The Rock of Worldlings is not as the Rock of Believers: Carnal confidences in the issue, render ashamed, God hath blown upon them with his curse. *Thou shalt be ashamed of* Egypt, *as thou wast of* Assyria: saith God to his people, *Jer.* 2. 36. *Our Fathers inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit*, Jer. 16. 19. *The very houses of* Achzib *shall be a lie to the King of* Assyria, Mic. 1. 14. A wicked man hath no hope, and all the help he hath, will prove but a vain and deceitfull help.

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There is a weakneſs and infirmity, an uncertainty and inſtability, an unfaithfulneſs and inconſtancy, a vanity and vexation attends all Creatures. They are crackt Ciſterns, *Jer.* 2.13. Lying vanities, *Jonah* 2. empty duggs, and dry breaſts, failing Brooks, *Egyptian* reeds, which do not only fail but pierce. God hath put a periſhing nature into all created ſupports and ſufficiencies, and over and above curſed ſuch as make fleſh their arm. *Men of low degree are vanity, and of high degree a lie*, may promiſe much, but perform little or nothing, like the *Indian* Tree, the Leaves of their profeſſions are as big as a Target, but the Fruit of their actions as ſmall as a Bean. They are broken ſtaves, deceitfull bowes; *the portion of* Jacob *is not like them*, Jerem. 10. 15, 16. Take the choiceſt of created helps, and a man cannot promiſe himſelf any ſafety in them, or help from them. Friends and Relations may fail, Eſtates and Poſſeſſions may fail, health and ſtrength, comforts and accommodations, favour and friendſhip, ſupplyes and aſſiſtances may and will fail; yea, Kings and Princes may and have failed their dependants. *It's better to truſt in the Lord than in Princes*, Pſal. 118. 8, 9. *Multa cadunt inter calicem* —— Methinks I ſee every wicked man bringing (as once a Noble and Learned perſon was) to his finall execution with thoſe (as his laſt dying words in his mouth, ſpoken in the bitterneſs of his Soul) *Put not your truſt in Princes, nor the Son of Man, in whom there is no help!* What a ſad diſappointment did that Noble and worthy Earl meet with, who thought he had aſſurance of his Princeſſes favour, only by the intervening

miscarriage of a treacherous person? What said that great Cardinal when under Attainder, and given up into his Enemies hand as a sacrifice, *If I had but taken that care to have pleased my God, which I have done to serve my Prince, he would not have left me now in mine old age.* The World deals with her familiars and favourites as great men with their servants, keeping them, while young, healthy and able, but turning them off when they grow old, infirm and unserviceable. All meer Creatures will fail, external priviledges, high profession (it's not *Jacobs* profession, but his God that is his help) choice parts, common graces, and usefull gifts, great confidences, yea, a mans flesh and heart will fail. Wit and wealth will not help in the day of present trouble or eternal wrath: Gold and Silver will not deliver then. *Lo this is the man* (proclaimed he stands to all the world) *that made not God his trust*, Psal 52. 7. Aids and allies cannot help. Who can stand before much less against Omnipotency? What *Jerusalem* complains of under her Captivity will be sooner or later the sense and expression too of all that trust in any thing on this side God the great *Jehovah*, and stay short of Heaven, *Lam.* 4. 17. *As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help. In our watching we have watched for a Nation that could not save us.* What *Senacherib* told *Hezekiah* upon this accompt will prove most true, 2 *King.* 18. 21. *Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon* Egypt, *on which if a man lean, it will goe into his hand, and pierce it: so is* Pharaoh *King of* Egypt *to all that trust in him.* We may cry to these Idols, but they cannot answer

anſwer nor ſave us out of our trouble. *Iſa.* 46. 7. *They were all aſhamed* (ſaith the Prophet) *of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help*, Iſa. 30. 5. Let a private diſtreſs, a publick calamity come, a Sword, a Plague, a Famine, a Fire, Creatures cannot help; how much leſs when death and damnation comes to ſeize on the poor undone ſinner? What will they do in the day of that their Viſitation, in the deſolation which comes from farr, *to whom will ye flee for help, and where will ye leave your glory*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 10. 3. O the dreadfull and deſperate caſe of every poor ſinner, to be left thus without help and hope! Oh that careleſs and preſumptuous ſinners that now forget God, would a little turn aſide and ſee this ſad and ruefull ſpectacle! Didſt thou never ſee (O man) a poor condemned Malefactor, when receiving his Sentence, weeping, wailing, and lamenting, wringing his hands, furrowing his cheeks with tears, down on his bended knees for mercy? didſt thou never behold him haling to his place of Execution, roaring and yelling with the hideous thoughts of death and damnation? Sinner, this is thy caſe, or will be ſhortly. Thou muſt be ſentenced before Gods moſt righteous Tribunall, and there adjudged for Treaſon and Rebellion againſt the God of Heaven; and what will the Hypocrite do in the day *that God comes to take away his Soul?* Job 27. 8. The expectation of the wicked ſhall then periſh. Thou lookedſt for life, but behold death, a bleſſing but meeteſt with a curſe, for mercy but art ſent away with a portion of remedileſs, eaſeleſs, and endleſs miſery. Now while life laſteth, it may be,

becauſe ye have no changes, ye fear not God; but when God comes by his Providence to ring the changes as to thy temporal life, and plucks thee off the ſtage of the World, O what a diſmal hour, what a ſad Cataſtrophe will then attend thee! *The hope of the Hypocrite is as the giving up of the Ghoſt*, Job 11. 20. It may hold as long as his life continues, but at the utmoſt it ſhall expire with his breath. Then this bubble will fall, and the bladder of his vain hope (though ſwell'd with windy conceits to never ſo great a proportion) being pricked by the Lance of death ſhall evaporate into air, winde, and confuſion. The Hypocrites condition is now uncertain, he ſtands on a Quag-mire, every moment ready to drop into Hell. When he riſes in the morning he hath no ſecurity of being out of Hell till night, or lies down at evening, is at no certainty of immunity from divine wrath and vengeance while morning. But though he goes quietly to the grave when he dies, not only his priviledges, prayers, comforts, means, friends, but even all his hopes too, vaniſh and die with him. *Prov.* 11. 7. *The hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh.* In that great day of Gods anger, he will be as a man in a rain without a ſhelter, as a Souldier in a battell without Armour, as a Ship at Sea in a furious ſtorm without Anchor, he ſhall not be able to ſtand. Wretched Sinner, Thou mayſt run and read the ſadneſs of thy condition in thy Predeceſſors, *Saul*, *Eſau*, and *Judas*, and other Reprobates, and ſee what diſmal Tragedies they acted under their terrors of Conſcience, and deſperations of Spirit. In a word, (to turn from this doleſull knell) none knows what

what 'tis to want an intereſt in God, but an awakened conſcience on Earth, or a damned wight in Hell. All the hope a carnal wretch hath in this world, is only that he is on this ſide Hell.

Thirdly, This preſents us with the excellency of God above all creatures, men and Angels. He is that bleſſed object alone who can make the ſoul happy; and therefore the Pſalmiſt here gives him the prelation and preheminence above whatſoever is mortal and mutable; and ſhould we take a ſtrict examination of all creatures in Heaven or Earth without God, this *ſummum bonum*, they could not by their united force, and utmoſt influence, beſpeak or make the ſoul happy. The depth would ſay, it is not in me; and the Sea, it is not in me — All creatures would be found miſerable comforters, Phyſitians of no value. *I have ſeen an end* (ſaith *David*) *of all perfection.* The total of all creatures in their natures improved and advanced, and their quinteſſence extracted and refined, amounts but to this, *Vanity of vanities.* But in God there is enough to make the ſoul unſpeakably and eternally bleſſed. There is in him a ſufficiency to ſupply all the wants, and anſwer all the demands and cravings of the ſoul of man. *In his preſence is fulneſs of joy.* He can ſupport their hearts when weakeſt, and ſupply them when emptieſt: he can remove whatſoever threatneth the ſouls deſtruction, and confer whatever tends to its perfection. It was *Davids* concluſion of faith, when the Lord was his Shepherd, that he ſhould never want. God is a comprehenſive good, containing all that vertue and influence eminently in himſelf, which is in the creatures formally.

He can fill the ſoul, and yet never cloy it; give it a fulneſs, and yet no burden. The world delights nothing but in change and variety. The moſt choice meats, if common, prove nauſeous; and delightful muſicks, if conſtant, tedious and burthenſome. But *in unico Deo*, is all the heart can deſire or wiſh, and the conſtant enjoyment of him is Heaven to the ſoul, without any the leaſt glut or diſreliſh. There is a ſuitability in him to the ſouls of his People. He is the centre of all their deſires. And the degree of their ſatisfaction ariſeth as from the degree of their union with him, ſo the degree of his proportion to them. He is an adequate and commenſurate good to the deſires and hopes of a gracious ſoul. There is an exact agreement between his ſweetneſs, and the ſouls taſte, which creates a moſt ſavoury reliſh of him in the ſouls palate. God alone being the higheſt object of faith, is the greateſt ground of joy and ſatisfaction. And ſuch a ſuitableneſs is in him to the ſoul, that it deſires nothing like, nothing but himſelf. Heaven it ſelf would be but Hell without him. The Kings preſence is that makes the Court. A Saint is more pleaſed with the enjoyment of God, than of Heaven, glory, ſalvation it ſelf. He is his Peoples ſalvation. As no ſacrifices content God which his People offer him without the oblation of themſelves; ſo nothing of all his donations delights his People without he beſtows himſelf as a Legacy upon them. And then his Eternity in his being, and fidelity in his Promiſes is a great aggravation of his Peoples happineſs, as well as his own excellency. It's the main ſcope of the Pſalmiſt in theſe verſes to recommend

commend God to us, and repreſent him as a fit object of our faith, and aſſured ground of our bleſſedneſs from his truth and faithfulneſs. Creatures, as they are all unſatisfying, like drink in a dropſie, that is ſo far from quenching our thirſt, that it rather enflames it; ſo likewiſe deceitful, like *Abſolons* Mule running from under us, when we have moſt need of their ſtay, and Halcyon-birds that abide with us in Summer, but when Winter once comes, are upon the wing, and gone. But God is the faithful and living God, whoſe truth never fails, mind never changes, good will never abates towards his People. He may change his outward diſpenſations, but not his inward diſpoſition. *Non deſerit, etiamſi deſerere videatur:* We may loſe our viſion of, and influence from him, but never our union and communion with him. He may for a time deſert us, when we extravagate from him, but will never utterly diſinherit us, and caſt us out of his favour and protection; but though for a moment he forſakes, with everlaſting kindneſs he remembers us.

Fourthly, This teacheth us the folly and danger of all oppoſitions againſt, and oppreſſions of the People of God. If God be their help, who ſhall be their deſtroyer, or dare be their oppoſer? And yet ſuch is the madneſs and phrenſie of the world, as they will venture to ſet themſelves againſt thoſe God hath ſet himſelf for. The wicked have ſhamed the counſel of the poor, becauſe the Lord is his refuge. They know what to do well enough with him for all that, they are reſolved to perſecute him, let him ſave and deliver him. *Many there*

be

be (ſaith *David*) *which ſay of my ſoul, there is no help for him in his God*, Pſal. 3. 2, 3. Theſe in their triumphant bravado's, and flouriſhing vapours are their vain and curſed concluſions; I will purſue, I will overtake, that's their deſperate reſolution. The world is reſolved to hate thoſe God loves, and perſecute them God hath undertaken to protect. They will kick againſt the pricks, and though they cannot reach the perſon (Chriſt, whoſe Image the Saints do but repreſent) yet *Panther*-like in their rage, they will tear the picture: Either by ſecret fraud they are conſulting againſt Gods hidden ones, to undermine them, or by open violence endeavouring to overthrow them. But ſuch is the Saints ſtability in God, that the very gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt them. They are as Mount Sion that cannot be moved. They do but throw ſtones againſt the wind, go about to pluck the Sun out of Heaven (as thoſe *Barbarous* Nations, who when ſcorched by the heat of it, endeavour with their arrows to ſhoot at it.) There is no enchantment againſt *Jacob*, nor divination againſt *Iſrael*, ſaith *Baalam* himſelf a Wizzard, *Numb.* 23. And God hath ſet a *noli me tangere* about his People, *Pſal.* 106. 15. Yea promiſed, *that no weapon formed againſt them ſhall proſper*. God will turn thoſe weapons againſt themſelves, and cauſe all their arrows to return on their own heads. God will be an enemy to his Peoples enemies, and bring ruin on all the Churches oppreſſors. It's *Solomon*'s counſel not to oppreſs the poor, becauſe his Redeemer is mighty. The Moſt High regards it, and will reward it too, and relieve them under it. For the

oppreſſion

oppreſſion of his poor and needy he will alſo ariſe, and ſet him in ſafety from him that puffeth at him, *Pſa.* 12. 5. God is his Peoples ſecond, and ſtands at their back; he will uphold *Jacob*, though a Worm; he hath undertaken their defence, and will vindicate their cauſe. They therefore have no cauſe to fear, or their enemies to triumph. God ſtands Sentinel over them, never ſlumbers or ſleeps, and they may ſleep ſecurely, while he awakes; as that great Commander did when his Captain was watching the enemies motion. *David* will never flie, or run for't, as long as he hath God for his ſhield, *Pſal.* 11. 1. *In the Lord* (ſaith he) *put I my truſt: how ſay ye to my ſoul, fly as a Bird to your Mountain?* And neither have their enemies any ground of confidence. Would not you think that man worſe than mad, whom you beheld ſetting his ſhoulders againſt a ſtrong and well-built houſe, thinking to overturn it of its foundation, or againſt an impregnable Rock, endeavouring to remove it from its place? Such and infinitely far worſe is their vanity, who ſet themſelves againſt the Lord and his Anointed. None ever yet ſet himſelf againſt the Almighty, or ſhall ever do, but will be ſure to have the worſt of it. God ſaies, *Zach.* 12. 3. *He will make Jeruſalem a burthenſome ſtone for all people: all that burden themſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces.* *Hierom* tells us, that at the entrance of the gate of *Jeruſalem*, there lay very great ſtones, by the lifting whereof men uſed to try their ſtrength: He that could heave them came off without any harm, but they which attempted, and could not lift them, were ſorely bruiſed and battered, if not utterly

utterly ſpoiled by them. Such will be the iſſue and ſucceſs of all wicked mens deſigns and enterprizes againſt Gods People, who have him as the ſtone of their help, all their powers, policies, attempts, and under-ground devices ſhall come to nought and confuſion, their miſchief come down on their own head, and their violent dealing on their own pate; yea, all their conſederacies and combinations as well as conſpiracies, and ſecret machinations ſhall be broken in pieces, *Iſa.* 8. 9, 10. And as God told the *Iſraelites* once when leaning on the *Egyptians*, both he that helpeth, and he that is holpen ſhall both fall together, *Iſa.* 31. 3. — O that the world would at length learn the wiſdom not to oppoſe God, and ſo run on the pikes of their own inevitable ruin; but rather kiſs the Son, leſt they periſh in his wrath when kindled but a little — And (which is a conſequence of this, or rather a juſt inference upon it) let all that pretend to bear good-will to Sion, beware openly or covertly of taking in againſt Gods intereſt and cauſe, whatſoever be their diſguiſes or pretences, leſt it comes home by them in the end. If *Meroz* was curſed for not helping the Lord againſt the mighty, what will be their doom, who dare help the mighty againſt the Lord? If good *Jehoſaphat* had ſo ſharp a reproof for helping with the ungodly, and thoſe who did not fear the Lord (*2 Chron.* 19. 2.) They muſt needs not only be blamed, but alſo curſed, who will venture to aid, abet or aſſiſt the wicked againſt thoſe who fear the Lord, and are the objects of his help and protection — And ſo much by way of deduction and inference.

Secondly,

Secondly, This provokes to examination. If they be thus happy who are intereſted in God, and have him as their help and hope, it's worth our enquiry, whether this God be our God, and conſequently our help and hope in the day of evil. Now, if we would know this our intereſt, let us take firſt ſome general ſigns of an intereſt in him: Secondly, ſome more particular evidences or diſcoveries of our making him our hope and help. —

The firſt mark or ſign of an intereſt in God, is union with him in and through Chriſt. All creatures (through the fall) are out of favour at Heaven, and there is no coming to God but through his Son, *He is the way, the truth, and the life.* The way in which, the truth by which, the life unto which the ſoul moves and comes. No man comes to the Father, but by him, nor knows the Father, but 'tis of his revealing. We are far off from God by nature, but draw nigh through Chriſts blood, that new and living way — If we know him, we know alſo the Father. Are our ſouls united then to Chriſt by faith? have we received him as our Lord and Saviour, Prince and Prieſt, to ſave and ſanctifie, redeem and rule us? are we joyned to him by the ſame ſpirit? does he dwell in our hearts by faith? is he in us, and we in him, and abides in us as the hope of our glory? our intereſt in him is a ſure and infallible evidence of our intereſt in the Father. He is the only *Jacobs* ladder whereby we can climb up to communion with the God of *Jacob*. His foot is on Earth, but his top in Heaven.

The ſecond is our covenant-obligation to him.

I entred

I entred into a covenant with thee ſaith God, *and thou becameſt mine*, Ezek. 16. 8. Iſa. 55. 3. There is a mutual covenant between God and his People: as he hath engaged for their ſalvation, ſo have they for his ſervice. *O Lord, I am thy Servant*, (quoth *David*) and ſo the Church, *Micah* 4. 5. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* She gives up her ſelf to God, not only in a way of ſingle confidence, but reſolute obedience. The relations are mutual between God and his People; he becomes theirs, and they his. They are betrothed (in the marriage-covenant) to him in judgement, righteouſneſs, tender mercies, and faithfulneſs, and they know the Lord. Art thou then, O ſoul, brought into covenant with God? haſt thou broken off that accurſed league with ſin and Satan, by righteouſneſs, and engaged thy ſoul ſolemnly to become a faithful ſervant to him as thy only Liege-Lord, and no other? Art thou reſolved to fear, love and ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the daies of thy life, and to glorifie him in thy ſoul, body and ſpirit which are his? Thy engagement for his glory, is an hopeful ſign of his engagement for thy good.

Thirdly, Intimate acquaintance, and indeared communion with him. *Abraham* had great intereſt in God, and as great acquaintance with him. We may ſee in *Sodoms* caſe, how boldly he goes to him. Friendſhip with God breeds an holy familiarity. So *Moſes* had a large ſhare in Gods favour, and God ſpake to him face to face, and he talked with him again as a man with his familiar friend.

friend. There are ſweet communications of counſel between God and a gracious ſoul. *Our fellowſhip is with the Father*— 1 Joh. 1. 3. *David* was a man after Gods own heart, and had intimate acquaintance with God, went to him by faith and prayer on all occaſions. *It's good for me* (ſaith he) *to draw near to God*; and *one daies communion with him, is worth a thouſand.* It was ſaid of *Charls* the great, he converſed more with God than men. As all communion is founded in union, ſo true union diſcovers it ſelf by flowing forth in acts of communion. Now, Chriſtian, what communion maintains thy ſoul with God in prayer, private, ſecret, in meditation, in publick Ordinances? Is it thy meat and drink, thy joy and rejoycing, to work righteouſneſs, and meet him in his wales? Thou canſt have no intereſt in God, if thou liveſt without him in the world, nor canſt call him Father truly, if thou haſt not, or doſt not know him.

Fourthly, Sympathy and fellowſhip with him. Gods intereſt and the ſouls are not two, but one; they are like two Turtles, if one dies, the other never lives comfortably after, but ſorrowing for the loſs of her Mate. God is ſenſible of, and well-pleaſed with all the good done to his People, his language is, *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to theſe, ye have done it to me.* And his people are affected with, and rejoyce in all the glory is brought to him; and had rather loſe their comfort, than their God ſhould loſe his honour: They deſire he alone ſhould be magnified, and are willing to be made ſtirrups for him to riſe by, though it be by their utter downfall. And as they are ſatisfied in each

others good, ſo ſenſible of each others evil. God ſympathizeth with his Peoples ſufferings; *In all their afflictions he is afflicted:* And they with his affronts and injuries. The intereſt of God lies nearer their hearts than any thing elſe in the world. They count not their own lives dear, ſo they may but ſave his honour, and ſo he be magnified; though they be reproached, impoveriſhed, impriſoned, baniſhed, perſecuted, they think themſelves well apaid: What ſympathy haſt thou with Gods cauſe and intereſt? doſt thou account the glory brought to him, as good done to thee? and take the injuries he ſuffers as offered to thy ſelf? Canſt thou wiſh thy ſelf a ſhield to fence off thoſe diſhonours which are caſt on the face of thy Lord and Maſter? Art thou meek as a Lamb in thy own cauſe, but fierce as a Lion in Gods, zealous for the Lord God of *Iſrael?* how art thou affected when thou heareſt his holy Name torn by the black mouths of the wicked, and their tongues ſet on fire from Hell? when thou ſeeſt his Creatures abuſed, his Ordinances prophaned, his People trampled under foot, his Truth deſpiſed, his Attributes blaſphemed, his Sabbaths unhallowed, his Worſhip polluted? If thou beeſt in the relation of a Son, thou wilt not endure to ſee one ſpit on thy Fathers face; or an ingenuous Servant, wilt not bear thy Maſters wrong behind his back.

Fifthly, Suitable affections. Where there is intereſt in God, all the affections of the ſoul have their out-goings after him. Thou haſt,

Firſt, An high eſteem and valuation of him. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* Intereſt raiſeth eſtimation.

eſtimation. The Father eſteems his Child, and the Husband his Wife, and ſo *vice verſâ*, above all other, though they be deformed, and others beautiful; they weak, and others healthful; they rich, and others poor; they ignorant, and others learned and knowing, becauſe of their propriety in them. A Saint values God above all the world, above all things viſible or inviſible; counts all loſs, droſs, and dung in compariſon of him. He alone is to him the Pearl of true price. Gods People are precious to him above all others, and ſo is he to them likewiſe. They will part with all for him, preferring him before all, and venture all rather than loſe their hold of him, or ſacrifice their intereſt in him, *omnia levia preterquam quod tui carendum*— How ſtands their eſteem poiſed?

Secondly, Thou haſt an ardent and affectionate love towards him. *I will love the Lord my ſtrength*, ſaith holy *David*, *Pſal.* 18. 1. Self-intereſt makes a man love his own. *Whom believing we love.* The applications of faith are alwaies ſeconded with the imbraces of love. He that hath God for his God, hath had experience of his love in Chriſt, ſome taſtes of his love ſhed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghoſt; and he cannot but love him by whom he was firſt loved. This love conſtrains him, *Amor meus Pondus meum*— Does mercy love miſery, and ſhall not miſery love mercy? beauty affect deformity, and ſhall not deformity re-affect beauty? glory ſhine on duſt, and they not reflect on glory? *Nimis durus animus, qui etſi amorem non vult impendere, tamen non vult rependere. Bernard.* No ſoul ſo unworthy, as not to return love for love.

Thirdly, Thou haſt an earneſt deſire and longing after him. How does the young heir (having intereſt) in his minority, long for the time when he ſhall be actually inveſted in his eſtate and inheritance? O how does the gracious ſoul pant and breathe, and hunger and thirſt, look and long for God! Never did the hungry man more deſire bread, the hydroptical drink, the barren wilderneſs rain, the thirſty traveller water, the purſued Hart the water-brooks, the longing woman the hour of her delivery, than it doth the preſence and enjoyment of God. *All my deſire, Lord, is before thee*, ſaith our *David*, Pſal. 38. 9, 10. *My heart panteth, my ſtrength faileth— My ſoul hath fainted for thy ſalvation, and it breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgements at all times*, Pſal. 119. *It is athirſt for God, for the living God*, not *ſiti miſeræ indigentiæ*, but *copioſioris fruitionis*. *Parthian*-like, the more the ſoul hath imbib'd of this *Helicon* fountain, the more it thirſts. Oh the ſecret breathings, earneſt longings, importunate cravings, vehement ejaculations, reſtleſs inquietations of a gracious ſoul after its God! By theſe wings of deſire, the ſoul (like *Davids* Dove) would flie up to Heaven. Others may deſire gold and ſilver, friends and relations, pleaſures and preferments, comforts and conveniencies in the world, but the deſire of the Churches ſoul, is only to his Name, and to the remembrance of him, *Iſa.* 26. 9. Could we be privy to the private devotions of the Saints, how many affectionate oh's and options ſhould we hear breath'd forth! how many even unutterable ſighs and groans ſent up for this to Heaven!

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Thy delight is wholly placed in God, and thou findeſt ſole ſatisfaction in him. The ſoul is wrapt up into an holy joy and rejoycing, drawn up to an exceeding complacency in him. God alone is the feaſt of the Saints delight, and with the one diſh of the light of his countenance, he is infinitely more ſatisfied, than the worldling is with his moſt largely ſpread and fully furniſht table. His Attributes are the ſouls chear, and his Promiſes his choice delicacies. He is abundantly ſatiated with the goodneſs of his houſe, and drinks of his pleaſures as a River: his communions are meat and muſick too. *Becauſe thou haſt been my help* (ſaith *David*) *therefore in the ſhadow of thy wings will I rejoyce. My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs*, Pſal. 63. 5, 7. The enjoyment of God is to the carnal wretch but a dry huſk, but to the Saint *a feaſt of fat things, and as Wines well refined on the Lees.* Though a thouſand Torches of creature-comforts be light, its night, dark with his ſoul, till this Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhines; but one ſmile of his face, and beam of his countenance, puts more gladneſs than could all Corn, Wine and Oyl, or does to thoſe who daily ſuck out their vertues and ſweetneſſes. God is his Peoples portion, and the only Paradiſe of their pleaſures; and while carnal men ſit chirping on the dunghill of outward felicities, he with the winged Lark ſings never ſo merrily as when mounting up to Heaven.

His heart greatly rejoyceth in him, and his Song doth praiſe him, *Pſal.* 28. 7. The Joy of the Lord is his ſtrength, and it is ſo lively and vigorous, as

even in Winter time it buds and bloſſoms forth from the God of his ſalvation.

A Fifth might be added, of Faith and Confidence, it's his Periphraſis in the Text, *whoſe hope is in the Lord his God*; in his Name doth he lift up his Banners. As propriety is the ground of delight, ſo of dependance: Though he kills me, I will truſt in him, though he damns me, I will love him: *The juſt ſhall live by Faith.* But not to prevent what follows.

A Fifth and laſt character or impreſſion of due affection flowing from an Intereſt in God is reſolution to cleave to him with full purpoſe of heart, to live and die with him, and whatſoever befalls him, not to forget him, or deal falſly in his Covenant, his heart ſtarts not back, neither doth he decline a ſtep from his Law. Whatſoever oppoſition he meets withall in the way of his duty, he leaps over it all, being reſolved though Princes ſpeak againſt him, to meditate in his ſtatutes, and ſeeing him that is inviſible, he fears not with *Moſes* to venture on the wrath of Man, rather than forfeit the love and favour of God, but with holy *Daniel* will continue in his Supplications, and abide in the way of his duty, though it coſts him his life. And as good old *Jacob*, when to part with his *Benjamin: If I be bereaved, I am bereaved*; and Queen *Eſther*, *If I periſh, I periſh.*

A Fifth character of one intereſted in God, is a renouncing and abandoning all other intereſts for him, of ſin, Satan, or the World. The Soul that hath once ſteept and bathed it ſelf in this Ocean of delights, yea taſted once of divine ſweetneſs, will never reliſh thoſe waters of bitterneſs again; that

that hath been fed with the bread and dainties in his Fathers Houſe, will never return with the Swine of the World to feed on huſks; That hath eaten of that heavenly and delicious Manna, will never fall to the Leeks and Onyons of this worldly *Egypt* again. *Ad majora nata es O anſina mea*— Regular apprehenſions of God raiſe and advance the Soul above the World, *None in Heaven but thee*— The Servant who engages with his new Maſter, takes a Releaſe from his old, a diſcharge from his former ſervice. *Lord, other Lords* (ſaith the Church) *have ruled over us, but now we will make mention only of thy Name*, Iſa. 26. *None of us*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *live to our ſelves, but to the Lord*, Rom. 14. 8. They are men of another Spirit. *Hebr.* 11. 24. *Moſes choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.*

A Sixth mark or evidence is earneſt Endeavour, and vehement purſuit after God. The Soul makes it his τὸ ἔργον, to follow after him. *My ſoul preſſeth hard after thee*, ſaith *David*, *even as the Hunter after his prey*, Pſal. 63. 8. He follows God fully, *Numb.* 14. 24. full chaſe he drives after God, more knowledge and experience of him, more communion and acquaintance with him. He ſets himſelf to ſeek the Lord. His heart does not hang down; but he is lift up in the way of the Lord, and to his Commandments which he hath loved. He ſings in the ways of the Lord. He walks in them and is not weary, runs in them, and is not faint; he exerciſeth himſelf to Godlineſs, makes Religion his trade and buſineſs. He walks with God, and worthy of the Lord in all well-pleaſing,

and 'tis his meat and drink to do the will of his Father in Heaven: He thinks nothing too much, all too little for God; ſpares no labour, coſt or pains, to acquaint himſelf more with him. He prays, he hears, he reads, he meditates, he weeps, he watcheth, he runs, he fights, he ſtrives, and all to obtain further aſſurance, to apprehend that for which he is apprehended of him.

And ſo much for the more general ſigns of our Intereſt in God. To touch ſecondly about a few more ſpecial ſigns of having him our help and hope.

Firſt, If God be our Help, and we ſo make him, there will be a diſobligation to, and utter diſcarding of, rejection, and caſting away all creature-confidence. The Soul hath no confidence in the arm of fleſh, as to its ſpiritual condition, not in Means and Ordinances, gifts, parts, duties, graces, enjoyments, but accounts all loſs;— as to its temporal condition, it truſts not to its power, wit, policy, ſtrength, wealth, eſtate, friends,— makes not fine Gold its hope, as *Job* ſpeaks in vindication of his integrity, *cap.* 3. 24. *Ezra* was aſhamed to go with a requeſt to the King, though in a good Cauſe, having firſt declared his truſt in his God, *Ezra* 8. 12. A gracious Soul renounceth all carnal dependencies whatſoever. Neither Circumciſion or Uncircumciſion avails him; he glorieth only in the Lord. He will not pluck the Crown off the head of Free grace, or ſnatch it out of the hand of Divine power, to ſet it on the head of a poor finite Creature. A carnal heart can truſt any thing but God, a Chriſtian can truſt nothing but God, him before any thing, all things.

A Worldling can truſt God in nothing, a Saint in all things, at all times; can truſt him with his Name, Eſtate, Liberty, Life, Soul, his all; truſt him in good dayes, of peace and proſperity, in evil dayes, of trouble and adverſity; being *carefull for nothing, but in every thing making his requeſts known to God with Prayer and Thanksgiving*; committing his whole way and care to him and his Providence.

Which is a ſecond Note. A conſtant exerciſe of dependance on God, and on God alone. He is his hope, and his habitation to which he continually reſorts, *Pſal.* 71. 2. Do's he want any mercy, he goes by Faith and Prayer, to his God for it; do's he meet with any miſchief or injury, he goes again and pours forth his overwhelmed Soul in complaints before the Lord; he waits for him, and looks to him. His *eyes are up to the Heavens, whence his help comes*, Mic. 7. 7. *Therefore*, ſaith the Church, *will I look to the Lord, and wait upon the God of my ſalvation.* And ſo *David*, Pſal. 5. 3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and will look up.* When he hath ſhut his mouth, he will open his eye, his ear, and when himſelf knows not what to do, hear what his God will ſay. He is alwayes confident in the Lord, and triumphs in the God of his ſalvation.

Now becauſe an Hypocrite may harbour a falſe dependance, and a counterfeit hope, as well as a Chriſtian a well-grounded confidence, let us try it by ſome following Touch-ſtones; which is the third and laſt particular concern'd in this Inquiſition, with which I ſhall diſmiſs it, namely, to give ſome Notes, or lay before you ſome properties

perties and effects of a Saints fixed hope in the Lord his God, which may diſcriminate and contradiſtinguiſh it from the languiſhing and vaniſhing hope of Hypocrites, and carnal Profeſſors. And them take in theſe following particulars.

Firſt, A godly mans hope is a grounded Hope. He hath the root of the matter in him. The righteous hath an everlaſting foundation; the Hypocrite hath no bottom. *Theſe have no root*, *Luk.* 9. 13. The houſe on the Sands was raiſed to an equal height with that on the Rock, and the difference was not in the ſuperſtructure, but only in the foundation. A carnal man may have as firm a confidence as a Saint, and an Hypocrite as ſtrong a preſumption as an upright Soul hath a perſwaſion, but not ſo good an evidence. Now confidence is always nought without evidence. The jetting hope of an Hypocrite is built upon his external profeſſion and priviledges, as a worldlings is on his meer outward enjoyments. His confidence is in the fleſh, but a Saints hope is bred and maintained too by the Word, and Promiſes, *Heb.* 6. 18, 19. It's nouriſht by ſpiritual influences and experiences. As it is founded on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that bringing in of a better hope, that hope in us of our glory, ſo 'tis backt with good evidence. *I will truſt in him*, ſaith *Job*, *though he kills me, I will maintain mine own wayes before him. He alſo is become my ſalvation: but an Hypocrite ſhall not come before him*, cap. 13. 15, 16. The Apoſtle calls a Believers, *a good hope through grace*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 16. through grace favouring as the Spring, and grace ſanctifying as the fuel of it.

Secondly,

Secondly, It is an Effectual hope, hath a bleſſed vertue and efficacy in it, eſpecially a ſix-fold vertue.

Firſt, *Ad purificandum*; to purifie the heart and Conſcience of a Chriſtian. What the Apoſtle ſaith of Faith may be ſaid of Hope, *it purifies the heart*. Yea, he ſayes it expreſly of this grace alſo, 1 *John* 3. 3. *He that hath this hope purifies himſelf even as God is pure: Secundum ſpeciem*, though not *gradum*, in kinde and quality, though not equality: If not in act, yet at leaſt in endeavour and affection. Hope purgeth the Conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God; by it the Soul draws nigh to God, and comes to have a ſight and view of him, and *Omnis viſio aſſimilat*. Proportionable to our Faith is our Holineſs, and to our Expectations our Converſation. This diſtinguiſheth it from all Formaliſts preſumption. Hypocrites lean on the Lord, and are confident of his preſence amongſt them, though they perpetrate all manner of wickedneſs, and do all kind of abominations, *Mic.* 3. 11. But in vain do ſinners load Gods back, and yet pretend to lean on his Arm. Security and preſumption lead men to ſin: Iſa 57. 10. *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way, yet thou ſaidſt not, there is no hope: Thou haſt found the life of thine hand, therefore thou waſt not grieved.* And deſperation alſo makes them ruſh on in courſes of Iniquity. *Jer.* 18. 12. *They ſaid, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart*; a ſad and deſperate concluſion. But true hope draws the Soul off from ſin. Whatſoever a Childe of God doth, he will not

not ſin againſt, and away his hopes; but having hope in Gods Word, and in thoſe great and precious Promiſes, he cleanſeth himſelf from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, *Tit.* 2. 12, 14.

Secondly, *Ad excitandum*, it quickens unto duty. It's a living, yea, a lively hope, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. Where hope is in the centre, obedience is in the circumference. *David* conjoyns them, *Pſal.* 119. 166. *Lord, I have hoped for thy ſalvation, and done thy Commandments.* Believing puts upon doing. Hope of mercy quickens and animates to duty. We believe, and therefore we ſpeak and act too: and no good hope of the end without due uſe of the means; means muſt be uſed, if a bleſſing expected. Faith hath a piercing eye, and a powerful hand; a receptive faculty, to take in the comfort of the Promiſe, and a reverberative, to return, and reflect its benefit received in waies of duty and obedience. Hoping to the end, and girding up the loyns of our minds, are paired, 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. In order to a progreſs in our ſpiritual Journey. The ſweetneſs of the Promiſe drawn out, incourageth and engageth in obedience to the command. The Plow-man ploweth, and Seeds-man ſoweth in hope. Expectation of reward edgeth to work. Diſuſe and neglect of means, doth not truſt God, but tempt him. True confidence ſpurs up to duty, eſpecially to prayer. Truſting and calling are coupled in Scripture, *Zeph.* 3. 2. Hope of ſpeeding puts a man on ſeeking. Hope of an expected end, put holy *Jeremiah* on praying, *Jer.* 19. And of ſalvation holy *Paul* on labouring and ſuffering reproach, on active and paſſive obedience, 1 *Tim.* 4. 10.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *Ad commorandum*, to take the ſoul off all carnal dependance, and ſtay it by a firm dependance on God alone. The hoping ſoul goes not to creatures, to ſecond cauſes, leans on none of theſe broken ſtaves, and vain confidences; but rejects and renounceth them all, both upon a ſpiritual and temporal account. It's the brand and mark of an Hypocrite, even carnal confidence. It's the character of a Chriſtian, to have no confidence in the fleſh, *Phil.* 3. 3. He does not only call himſelf of the holy City, but ſtaies himſelf on the God of *Iſrael* in truth, *Iſa.* 10. 20. A Chriſtian will not have two ſtrings to the bow of his truſt. The Pſalmiſt puts a direct oppoſition to truſt in God, and all other truſts, *Pſal.* 40. 4. *Bleſſed is the man that maketh the Lord his truſt; and reſpecteth not the proud, nor ſuch as turn aſide to lyes.* And the Church ſolemnly profeſſeth her rejection of all humane helps in time of her ſtraits, *Pſal.* 44. 6. *I will not truſt to my bow, neither ſhall my ſword ſave me* — not to the bow, but the arm that helps to do it. And ſo ſhe ſeals a renunciation of all creature-aids and aſſiſtances, *Hoſ.* 14. 3. *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon horſes* — Carnal men (like weak and ignorant people) go firſt to the Kitchin, and then to the Phyſitian. When *Ephraim* ſaw his ſickneſs, and beheld his wound, he goes to the *Aſſyrian*, and ſends to King *Jareb* to heal him. But the Church eccho's to Gods call, *Jer.* 3. 22, 23. *In vain is ſalvation expected from Hills or Mountains, in the Lord our God is the ſalvation of Iſrael*— We come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. She goes firſt to the Lord, and then to the Phyſitian.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *Ad componendum*, to pacifie the ſoul, and make it wait patiently the returns of providence. *Jacob* waited for Gods ſalvation, and *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* for the Kingdom of God. *I waited patiently for the Lord*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 40.1. As they who watch for the morning, *Pſal.* 130. As the poor traveller, beweildred all night, longs for the mornings approach to direct him in his paſſage: and the induſtrious labourer waits the morning light, and dawning of the day, that he may go about the work of his calling: or the vigilant ſouldier, and diligent watchman deſires the break of day, when they may be relieved: ſo doth a gracious ſoul wait for his God. The Church was reſolved thus to wait upon the Lord. *Micah* 7. Though an Atheiſt will wait no longer, a Saint will both wait for inſtruction and conſolation. Hopes concluſions are. Gods time is the beſt time. The viſion is but for an appointed time, it will come, and not tarry, wait for it. If deliverance comes not this, it may come another way. If mercy comes not to day, it may come to morrow. It's better ſtaying a day too long, than having ſalvation come an hour too ſoon. The expecting ſoul waits for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith; yea he hopes to the end for the grace to be brought at the revelation of Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. He waits till the Lord be gracious; he is not too quick or haſty (haſty births he knows are commonly abortive) he will not make more haſte than good ſpeed; he underſtands it's but manners to wait the Lords leiſure, and attend his pleaſure. God waited long for his coming in, in a way of duty, it's but meet he ſhould wait

for

for his approaches in a way of mercy. If God could ſtay ſo long for his converſion, it's but reaſonable he ſhould ſtay for his conſolations. Reſolved he is to wait ſo long as God pleaſes for incomes of mercy, and wholly reſolves his will into the will of his Maker, even let's it be buried and ſwallowed up of it, with a *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.* Carnal men would limit God to their deſires, and ſcant him to their time; they are for duty to morrow, but mercy and ſalvation to day. Now mercy muſt come, or never. But a Chriſtian would not have his time Gods, but makes Gods time his; and whatſoever pleaſeth God, therefore pleaſeth him. It's not (ſaith true hope) for us to know the times and ſeaſons, better to wait for the Lords ſalvation. Better want of mercy in a way of waiting and dependance, than its approach without it; Does God delay, he does not deny; is mercy deferred, it is not reſolved againſt; does God withdraw, hide his face, ſeem to ſlight, and caſt out his Peoples prayer, yet I will not give over praying, waiting, believing, and expecting, I will yet attend the motions of providence in the uſe of means; and though God ſeems to caſt us off, yet we will never caſt off him.

Fifthly, *Ad elevandum*, to raiſe the ſoul above all worldly expectations. He that by hope hath gotten his foot up to Heaven, looks upon all this inferiour world only as an inconſiderable point. *Our converſation* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is in Heaven, whence we look for the Saviour.* Heavenly expectations, and heavenly converſation go together. *Alexander*, when he once received a report

port of the *American* world, gave all the Kingdoms he had conquered amongst his Captains, and upon this diviſion, being asked what he had left to himſelf, anſwered, *ſpem majorum annorum*; the hope of further years. A Chriſtian hearing of the Alſufficiency of God, and glory of Heaven, of ſo much (*in ſcriniis*) in hope, is willing to part with whatſoever is in hand, and (like a provident and foreſeeing perſon) will part with all in poſſeſſion, for what he hath in reverſion; ſo did thoſe worthies, *Heb.* 11.13. A carnal man uſeth God, and enjoys the world; a Saint uſeth the world, but enjoyeth God only.

Sixthly, *Ad corroborandum*, to fortifie and confirm the ſoul againſt all oppoſition. *Abraham* rowed againſt the ſtream. Hope will ride the ſtorm. It may be ſaid of hope, what the Apoſtle ſpeaks of charity, it endures all things. There is the work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope, 1 *Theſ.* 1.3. *I will hope continually*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 71.14. Though his enemies be lively, yet his hope is not dead; and while they threaten more, he yet hopes more and more. All the waters of humane oppoſition cannot quench this fire, but it's like the fire of the Sanctuary, which never goes out. True hope grows by diſcouragement, and the wind of worldly affliction ſerves but to increaſe this holy flame. When as the ſpies gave a diſcouraging account of the Land, *Caleb* and *Joſhua* were not diſmay'd at their own ſight, or their report, but conclude, Their defence is departed, and they are bread for us. *They that wait on the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength*, and their hope too; and under the loweſt providences,

videnceſ, they have yet a *ſpero meliora* in their mouths, which keeps them from fainting and ſinking. And that leads to the third and laſt qualification of the Saints hope. It's ſtedfaſt and permanent. A Believer hath hope in his end, and he hopes to the end, *Heb.* 6. 11. *The full aſſurance of hope to the end*: And ſo *cap.* 3. 6. *Whoſe houſe we are, if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end.* God perfects this grace, whereſoever he begins it. An Hypocrites is a dying hope; a Saints, a living hope; there is a vigour and vivacity, and alſo a conſtancy and perpetuity in it. *We are not of them who draw back to perdition* --- An Hypocrites hope is an empty and vain, and ſo a vaniſhing hope, it hath no ſolidity in it, but appears a meer huſk, when Satan comes to threſh it by his temptations, it will not ſtand, or endure a trial. When he comes to go out of the world, his hope periſheth for ever, and breaths forth it ſelf into a puff of wind, though ſwoln to never ſo huge a bulk, and great a proportion. It hath no ſtalk, and when the Sun of divine indignation, or humane perſecution ariſeth, it wholly withereth: But a Saint (though for a while he may loſe the exerciſe) never wholly loſeth the habit of his hope; his hope is a fixed, ſtable, ſetled hope, *Col.* 1. 23. A carnal wretch can hope in good daies, while providence looks on him with a favourable and pleaſing aſpect; but let the Lord come to frown on him, and lay affliction on his loyns, his heart (like *Nabals*) dies within him, he ſinks like a ſtone, he carries with him a ſad heart, and looks with a lowring and dejected countenance: but a

child of God, as no outward comfort does much incourage him, ſo no outward croſs does much diſhearten him. Mercy does not much lift him up, nor miſery caſt him down; his concluſion is, I will yet hope in God, and never caſt away my confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. *Quo malis preſentibus durius deprimor, eo de futuris gaudiis certius præſumo*, ſaith holy *Ignatius*; by how much the more I am oppreſſed with preſent miſeries, ſo much the more confident I am of eternal joys, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17.

Thirdly, This ſpeaks ſharp reproof, even to the People of God themſelves, who are ſo apt to depend on, and run to means and ſecond cauſes in times of trouble and affliction, and not lay their hope and help on this God of *Jacob*, and his truth and faithfulneſs only. *Iſrael* was very prone to this corruption, to ſeek to, and rely on forein aids and helps, neglecting and refuſing to reſt upon God. This is ſinners wickedneſs, and Saints weakneſs and infirmity. This was the fault of good *Aſa*, zealous *Hezekiah*, holy *David*, who thought nothing better for them, than one to go to the Phyſitians before the Lord; another, to curry favour with the King of *Babylon*; and a third, to flie into the Land of the *Philiſtines*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *Vitium oſtendit* (ſaith a Commentator on the Text) *dum oſtendit remedium*. This is natural to the loſt, but yet proud Sons and Daughters of *Adam*. The firſt man had a ſpice of pride in him, and all his poſterity have gotten a tang of it. The ſtout ſouldier will never accept quarter, as long as he can ſtand out againſt the enemy, or defend the beſieged City againſt his power and violence. Proud

ſtout-

ſtout-hearted man would neither be beholden to God or Chriſt for his help, could he but be his own Protector and Saviour. We are all by nature run-aways from God, and having a back-ſliding heart within us, are apt to revolt more and more, leaning on any broken Reed before him the eternal Rock. But this our way is our folly. This is our great ſin, and runs us alſo into an inextricable labyrinth of calamity and woe. It's no leſs than *crimen læſæ Majeſtatis*, when we have the covering of the Almighty's protection, and the wing of the great and everlaſting *Jehovah* to come under, yet to ſhroud our ſelves under the alien ſhadow of any creature; and when we may delighfully ſollace our ſelves under the Vines ſweetneſs, and Olives fatneſs, yet to ſhelter our ſelves under the vain ſhew of the Bramble. It's too convincing an Argument both of the weakneſs of grace, that our ſtrength is ſmall, and alſo of the power and predominancy of corruption. It's a plain and demonſtrative Argument of a carnal heart, to ſatisfie our ſelves with any outward enjoyment in the day of mercy, or ſupport, in the hour of miſery. How ſadly does God complain of this in his *Iſrael* of old? *Pſal.* 78. 22. They believed not in the Lord, nor truſted in his ſalvation. So *Deut.* 9. 23. *Ye rebelled againſt the Commandment of the Lord your God* (to go up againſt the Nations) *and ye believed him not.* God taxeth it of high diſingenuity and diſloyalty, *Jer.* 2. 5. *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity.* So *Jer.* 18. 13, 14. *The Virgin of Iſrael hath done a very horrible thing: Will a man*

leave the Snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the Rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? It's a tincture of Apostacy from God: Indeed a plain contradiction to our conversion. In that we turn from the Creature to the Creator, in this from the Creator to the Creature. It's a more spiritual and refined Idolatry, and therefore it's observable, these two are Couzen-Germans, neighbour-sins, and but one remove one from the other. Yea, the idolatry charged by the Apostle upon the Gentiles, hath this inscription on its forehead; *They worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, God blessed for ever*, Rom. 1. 25. And indeed whatsoever a man sets up above or equal with God, it's his God, or at least his Idol. And as it is a great iniquity, so it is commonly rewarded with exemplary punishment. This trust is both wicked and vain; it makes us neglect God the eternal Refuge; and while it deceives us, and makes us miss of a better ground of trust, it also weakens and debilitates both our hearts and hands; our hands in duty, and our hearts in confidence. (who will ever set upon that of which he hath no hopes of accomplishment? and who ever will go to God that can go any where else?) It's a following lying vanities, and forsaking our own mercies; a running from the fountain of everlasting waters, and hewing out broken cisterns. It laies us under a curse, and that a dreadful one, *Jer.* 17. 5, 13. *Cursed is he that makes flesh his arm — All that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and that depart from thee, their names written in the Earth;* than

than which nothing more ſad and diſmal. A curſed change it is to leave God, and go to the Creature; ſuch confidence commonly ends in ſhame and confuſion. Dependance on the Creature forfeits divine protection; it clips the wings of mercy: It's a going out of Gods bleſſing into the warm Sun. Nay, the Hypocrites bow, which never aims right on at the mark, is not only erring and deceitful, but often recoils, and proves to him deadly and deſtructive. They who repoſe in humane help, do not only miſs of the proſperity and ſafety, which by theſe means they made account to attain to, but bring evils on themſelves, which they both ſought and thought to eſcape, and loſe the lives they went about ſo induſtriouſly to ſave. And indeed God takes himſelf highly wronged by this abuſe at the hands of his People, and will ſooner or later ſay to them as to *Iſrael*, *Judg.* 10. *Go to the gods ye have choſen, and ſee if they can deliver you.* See how God threatens them, *Iſa.*30. 12, 15.—*In returning and reſt I would have ſaved you— and ye would not, but ye ſaid, no, we will flee upon horſes— therefore ſhall ye flee—* They who will not reſt on God, ſhall be forced to run for all the creature. May I not ſay to you, as once *Saul* to the people revolting to *David*, *Can the Son of Jeſſe give you Vineyards and Olive-yards—* Can the creature give your ſouls ſatisfaction in its fulleſt enjoyment, and can it afford you relief in the day of diſtreſs? Can theſe gods of your own making ariſe and ſave you? Can they chear your hearts, when God is frowning? ſuccour you, when Satan is tempting? comfort you, when the world is failing? Can they give

you any peace in an hour of troùble, eaſe under horrours of pain, life under pains of death, ſettlement and compoſure in a day of diſtraction and confuſion? have you not ſufficiently experienced, and ſo may be effectually convinced of the vanity of the whole arm of fleſh? That all fleſh is as graſs that fadeth, and the flower thereof that withereth. That men of low degree are vanity, and of high degree a lye, That there is no ſalvation in Hills or Mountains, no help in Princes, Senates, Armies, Navies, if God does but blow upon them? Have you not by ſad and wofull experience known the failure of friends, contingency of eſtates, the uncertainty of worldly advancements, the moth, the worm, the dying periſhing nature that is in all created comforts and contentments? and will ye yet lean upon theſe weak bulruſhes, and make his your refuge? May not God ſay to you, as once to his People, *Numb.* 14.11. *How long will it be ere ye believe me?* Nay, may not God juſtly leave you, when ye have firſt left him? and then what will become of you? To which of all the Saints will ye turn? what will ye do in the day that he comes out to viſit? Suppoſe God coming out with the glittering ſword in the one hand (nay, he is come out already) and the deſtroying Plague in the other, and fire and famine become his followers, whither will ye fly? where will ye hide? how ſhall you eſcape or endure his fierce wrath, and burning indignation? what will you do in the day of your calamity? or where will you leave your glory? Well, to cloſe this point (for I would hope better things of all you that fear God, though I thus ſpeak) know aſſuredly,

aſſuredly, that by going from God your Centre, unto the Creature, you will either run into the mouth of danger (like a bird far from her neſt, never under ſuch danger of the ſnare) you cannot be eſtabliſhed, but may be (as they were *Jude* 5.) for their unbelief deſtroyed; or however you will cut ſhort the arm of mercy and deliverance. As impatient ſnatching at mercy, makes it not half ſo ſweet; fruits pluckt too ſoon, or raw eaten, commonly gripe. *Jacob* had not only a blow, but a piece of a curſe, a deal of turmoil and trouble with his bleſſing, becauſe he would be his own Carver, and not ſtay to receive it at his heavenly Fathers hand, and diſcontented murmurs and repinings againſt God under affliction, cut ſhort of mercy and ſalvation; a ſad inſtance whereof we have in thoſe two prime Leaders of *Iſrael*, *Moſes* and *Aaron*, *Numb.* 20. 12. *Becauſe they believed not the Lord, to ſanctifie him before the eyes of Iſrael*, they were not priviledged to lead the Congregation into the good Land. So confident repoſes in the Creature, without God, or conjunction of it in our dependance with him, will certainly breed in the iſſue diſappointment and deſtruction; and the ſoul that with *Babylon*, ſits Lady-like in its Chair of State and Eaſe, will become a Widow and deſolate in one day. And (which is the great aggravation of the miſery of all ſuch confidence) the more we lean, and greater ſtreſs we lay on any creature-comfort, when God comes once to blaſt it, and take it away (as 'twere) by a ſtroke, it will become ſo much the greater croſs, and ſo much affliction we may expect from it, as we have had affection to it, and placed dependance

upon it. Put not your truſt therefore in man, or place your confidence in bare Creatures, for whoſe ſhoulders an immortal Soul carries too great a burden, but *Truſt in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.* Let me conclude this with the Prophets advice, *Jer. 9. 23. Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, nor the ſtrong man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches, But let him that glorieth glory in the Lord:* And with that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal. 62. 8, 10. Truſt not in Oppreſſion— if riches increaſe, ſet not your heart upon them.* But truſt in him at all times, and finally with that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim. 6. 17. Truſt not in uncertain riches, but in the living God.*

Fourthly, *Solamen miniſtrat.* This Doctrine comes full fraught with comfort, and ſpeaks abundant and matchleſs conſolation to all the People of God, who have this Intereſt in him, and exerciſe dependance upon him as their hope and help. The godly man is the only bleſſed man. The World may count and call her darlings happy but no ſuch bleſſedneſs to be found as in the fruition of God, and derivations from him. *Bleſſed he is,*

Firſt, In all his Relations and concernments, as to his ſpiritual ſtate, and as to his temporal. He having an intereſt in God, hath an intereſt in all that is Gods; all his Attributes, Relations, Promiſes, Providences, gracious and merciſull Benedictions; he hath a right to all ſpiritual bleſſings, pardon of ſin, peace of Conſcience, Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, grace and glory; and all temporal mercies too, the fatneſs of the Earth, as well as the dews of Heaven, the Nether as well as the Upper Springs: All is his by right and inheritance

tance, and ſhall be by poſſeſſion, if good for him. As a ſtranger from God is univerſally curſed, ſo is one united to him univerſally bleſſed. He may ſay, *God hath dealt graciouſly with me, and I have enough*, Gen. 33. 11.

Secondly, He is alſo happy in all Eſtates and Conditions. Nothing amiſs can befall and betide a Chriſtian. Though never ſo evil in it ſelf, Gods Power and Providence can work it for good. Art thou under deſertions, yet thou art happy. *His left hand is under thee, and his right hand embraceth thee:* Thou art graven upon the palms of his hands (ſo as to be no more defaced or obliterated) and thy walls are continually before him. Haſt thou loſt thy hold of God, he hath ſtill his hold on thee, canſt thou not caſt thy ſelf, and roll thy Soul on Chriſt in the Promiſe? yet, when thou comeſt out of the Wilderneſs, thou mayſt lean on the arm of thy beloved. Though thy Soul be never ſo much in the dark, thou haſt the ſtaffe of *Jacob* to lean on, and needeſt never fear ſtumbling, eſpecially falling, for the Lord alſo upholds thee by his hand, *Pſal.* 33. 24. Art under Temptations, ſtill thou mayſt be happy. Thy Redeemers Interceſſion is a ſhore of thy Faith, and pillar of thy Perſeverance, *Luk.* 22. 32. Though weak in thy ſelf, with the Conies thou mayſt fly to the Rocks: When purſued by that mighty *Nimrod* and hunter of Souls, and furiouſly chaſed by the avenging Executioner of Divine wrath, haſte into the arms and boſom of thy Saviour which ſtand extended on the Croſs, and are now wide open to receive thee: When theſe proud waters overwhelm thee, ſwim to that impregnable

pregnable Rock of his Merits which is higher than thou; and then thou mayſt (like a man gotten on the top of a rock in the midſt of the Sea, outbraving with an invincible courage and undaunted reſolution all the waves and billows about him) dare Satan to do his worſt againſt thee. Though the Beaſt makes warre againſt thee being a follower of the Lamb, God is on thy ſide, and ſtands by thee in the combat: this Dragon ſhall not ſwallow thee up: the Lord will rebuke him, yea tread him under thy feet ſhortly. Though thy own heart be a Traitor, thy God is thy Keeper. Art thou engaged with ſtrong and violent corruptions, do theſe Maſters of miſrule bid controll to Gods grace in thee, and is the battell ſo ſharp as ſometimes the fleſh ſeems to overcome the Spirit, thy pride, paſſion, unbelief, earthly-mindedneſs are too hard for thee? be not diſcouraged: Though thou beeſt foiled, thou ſhalt not be overcome; ſin ſhall not have dominion over thee, though it may tyrannize againſt thee; but thoſe thine enemies that will not bow before the Scepter of Chriſts Soveraignty, ſhall be ſlain before his face, and very ſhortly thoſe *Egyptians* thou ſeeſt to day, thou ſhalt ſee no more for ever. Art thou expoſed to wants and exigencies? The Lord is thy Shepherd, and he will ſupply thee as to thy ſpiritual, and alſo thy temporal condition. Doſt thou want the preſence of Divine Ordinances, are all theſe Conduits ſtopt, and windows ſhut? God will himſelf be a Tabernacle to thee; he will prepare a Table for thee in the Wilderneſs, ſpread with all the delicious ſweet-meats of grace and comfort, and the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe on thee with healing

healing in his wings. Doſt thou want Creature-comforts? The Earth is the Lords Granary, and the fullneſs thereof, and the Sea thy Fathers Fiſh-pond, and therefore thou ſhalt have what either can afford thee. Art thou ſequeſtred of all that is dear and precious in thine eyes? Thou haſt yet a *Deus providebit* to live on, a Promiſe to bear thee up, that God will never forſake thee, all things ſhall be added to thee. *Qui majora curat, non minora negliget.* The Acceſſory follows the Principal. There is no Promiſe indeed of adding Spirituals upon our ſeeking Temporals, but there is of adding the things of Earth, if we ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven. Thou ſhalt have food and raiment in the way wherein thou art to goe; enough, though not too much; according to Gods will, though it may be not thine own; bread for thy body, though not for thy luſts; to ſatisfie thee, though not ſurfeit; content, though not cloy thee. God will give thee the World as a bleſſing, though not lade thee with this thick clay as a burden. As thou haſt the ſure Mercies of *David*, whereof none can deprive thee, ſo thou ſhalt have all external accommodations, or at leaſt a proportion between thy Heart and Condition, wherein the only comfort of life conſiſteth. Art thou compaſſed about with fears and dangers, of enemies or evils imminent or impendent? Let not thine heart be troubled, for Mercy compaſſes thee about on every ſide: As *Eliſha* told his ſervant, 2 *King.*6.16. *There are more with thee than are againſt thee.* Thou haſt a guard of Angels round about thee, yea Chriſt himſelf for thy Protector. And *Fortior eſt Chriſtus caput Eccleſiæ ad protegendum,*

gendum, quam Diabolus hoſtis Eccleſiæ ad oppugnandum. Cyprian. This may be a bottom of confidence, and ſufficient ground and encouragement to the People of God in the darkeſt and gloomieſt day, the moſt evil and diſcouraging time; and ſerve to allay, and antidote all their fears and miſgivings of heart, that they have an infinite and everlaſting God for their help, and have everlaſting ſtrength, wiſdom, faithfulneſs, mercy and compaſſion engaged for them. Men count it an happineſs to have a Cottage of their own to hide their heads in. God is his Peoples ſhelter, Sanctuary, and hiding-place under all their ſcatterings, and diſperſions, oppreſſions and oppoſitions, they meet with in the World. *The Lord knows how to deliver the Godly out of all their temptations.* The Apoſtle brings it down to an experience, *He delivered* Lot, *and he knows how to deliver us.* It's all one to have no ſtorm, or to have an hiding-place. Under all private injuries and oppreſſions we may truſt in God who is a preſent help, and go to him with the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s words in our mouths when the men of *Anathoth* ſought his life, *Jer.* 11. 20. *To thee O Lord, do I reveal my cauſe,* and be confident as he was, *cap.* 20. 11. of deliverance; or as *Hezekiah*, when *Rabſhaketh* opened his mouth ſo wide againſt Heaven, he went and ſpread the Letter before the Lord. Though a man meets with nothing but incivilities, unkindneſſes, diſcouragements, diſappointments, reproaches, perſecutions and violences from men, yet there is enough in one God to counter-ballance all. God will work all miſchiefs about for good; and as for Enemies, in the Name of

of the Lord we may go out againſt them and overcome them. Art thou under croſſes and loſſes, and ſore and vexatious trialls that way? haſt loſt thy Eſtate, and Poſſeſſions, thy Relations, thy former Friends, thy preſent comforts, thy hopes, thy all? yet thou haſt not loſt thy God, who is better than all. And as *Zeno* the Philoſopher ſaid once, when he had loſt all by Shipwrack, *Licet me tutius philoſophari.* Thou haſt now the better leiſure to attend thy Soul, and ſtudy Heaven. Though a man loſeth his Moneys, and is rich in Bills and Bonds, it's no great matter: When thou haſt not a penny in thy Purſe, thou haſt thouſands in the Promiſe. Gods providence, or mens violence may take away thy Eſtate, thy Children, thy Livelihood and ſubſiſtence, but never take away thy Chriſt. When thou haſt loſt all things elſe, yet thou canſt never loſe thy God, and thy inheritance, the hope laid up for thee in Heaven; that heavenly and never-failing treaſure is out of the reach both of Men and Devils. Art thou under afflictions perſonal, family? Hath the hand of God toucht thee? Hath his deſtroying Angel come with the Arrows of the Plague, and ſhot into thy habitation, ſo that thou art left alone, and become wholly comfortleſs, even ſwallowed up of ſorrow? Thy Relations are gone, thy Friends fled from thee, all thine acquaintance ſtand aloof off thy ſore; thou ſigheſt and mourneſt by day, weepeſt by night, and haſt none to comfort thee; thou art become like a Pelican in the Wilderneſs, an Owl in the Deſart, and ſitteſt like a Sparrow on the houſe-top: Death is entred in at thy windows, and men have written *Lord have Mercy* on thy

thy doors, and thou haſt neither Miniſter nor Phyſitian to come at thee; yea, wanteſt Bread it ſelf to uphold thee: Yet fear not, Thy God is ſtill with thee, and then nigheſt, when all Creatures run away to the greateſt diſtance. Chriſt comes in yet familiarly at thy doors, God ſtands by thy beds ſide. Though the Plague hath ſeized thy body, he is not afraid to come neer thy ſoul, and while thy Friends forſake thee, he will be Friend, Phyſitian and Comforter to thee. He is the Lord that healeth thee: And thou ſhalt at laſt ſay, in faithfulneſs and mercy to thy Soul did he afflict thee; yea, that thou wert not ſick, becauſe the Lord had forgiven thy iniquity. Nay, here is comfort for thee even in Death it ſelf, if thou haſt God for thy help, and he affords thee his gracious preſence, thou ſhalt not need fear to walk through that dark ſuburbs of Eternity. *As dying, and yet ſhalt thou live.* Death is but to thee a Portall into Everlaſting Life; and what is a grimm Serjeant to arreſt others, and Purſevant to hale them to the place of Execution, ſhall be a welcom Meſſenger to carry thee into thy Fathers Houſe, and uſher thee into the Preſence-Chamber of thy endeared Bridegroom. And when thou art gathered to thy Fathers, though thou goeſt to thy long, yet thou ſhalt not go to thy laſt home. Thy *Exodus* of Earth ſhall be thy *Geneſis* of Heaven; and when the great Landlord of Heaven and Earth, by a Commiſſion directed from his Royal Court ſummons thine immortal Soul out of this Clay-tenement of thy Body, thou ſhalt enter upon thine upper Houſe, thoſe ever-bleſſed Manſions prepared for thee; and this

Bird

Bird in thy breaſt, when once let looſe this preſent cage where now it is impriſoned, and ſet upon the Tree of life in the midſt of that heavenly Paradiſe, ſhall warble out the moſt melodious tunes, and ſweet and harmonious muſick to its Creator, even to the daies of Eternity. Let me conclude this conſolation with that of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 14. 32. *The righteous hath hope in his death:* And add only this challenge on this ſide the grave for him againſt the ſinner. Take a child of God cloathed with all poſſible diſadvantages, poverty, ſickneſs, perſecution, even at the worſt that can befall a man on this ſide Hell, and his condition is infinitely far better than any wicked mans on Earth, that hath ſumptuous buildings, furniſht tables, pleaſant children, great riches and revenues: So happy is he above all the world beſides that hath God for his help, the Lord for his God.

Fifthly and laſtly, Let this conſideration be a ſtrong perſwaſive both to the Saints and People of God, to walk worthy his help, and ſinners, to labour to make him their God and help againſt an evil day.

Firſt, To Chriſtians, to walk anſwerably to divine help and influx, both in a good, and in an evil day. Take the ſumm of this exhortation in five or ſix branches. Let the influence of Gods help be to you a ground of praiſe and thankfulneſs, of ſatisfaction and acquieſcence, of acceſs to him on all occaſions, of confidence in him in every condition, of return to him according to your receivings from him, and of engagement and firm adherence to him, notwithſtanding all temptations to Apoſtacy from him.

Firſt,

Firſt, Matter of thankfulneſs. *Rejoyce in the Lord at all times*; Let ſongs of benediction to him be ever in your mouths; pay him the conſtant tribute of acknowledgement. What an holy Panegyrick does *David* ſing? *Pſal.* 18. 12. What a famous avouchment makes he? *Pſal.* 144. 1, 2. Where he gives God all his titles: My ſtrength, my goodneſs, my fortreſs, my ſhield, my high Tower, and deliverer: And ſo does *Jeremiah*, *cap.* 16. 19. Even proclaim Gods Name to the Gentiles, that they might truſt in him. In Gods Name ſet up all your banners: Say with the Church, All our freſh ſprings are in thee. *Nilus ab ignoto fonte*— but our ſalvation comes from Sion; thence the Lord commands the bleſſing. We finde our Pſalmiſt frequent in theſe confeſſions, *The Lord is on my ſide*, Pſal. 118. 6. *I will ſing of thy power, yea I will ſing aloud of thy mercy in the morning, for thou haſt been my defence and refuge in the day of trouble*— Pſal. 59. 16, 17. And ſo again, *Pſal.* 94. 17. *Unleſs the Lord had been my help, my ſoul had almoſt dwelt in ſilence, when I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* And ſo the Church ſolemnly ſings, under the ſenſe of her miraculous deliverance from variety of enemies; *If the Lord had not been on our ſide— they had ſwallowed us up quick*--And ſee how ſweetly ſhe cloſeth all, *Pſal.* 124. *ult. Our help ſtandeth in the Name of the Lord who made Heaven and Earth.* So may the ſoul ſay, I was under ſuch a temptation, and had not the Lord helpt me, where had my ſoul been? under ſuch an affliction, and had not he relieved me, I had ſunk and periſht in it for ever. How oft have I ſinned

and

and he pardoned me, prayed, and he heard me, waited, and he was gracious to me? I was weak, but he ſtrengthened me, ſad, but he comforted me, troubled, but he ſpake peace to me. And ſo may the Church of God ſay, If the Lord had not been on my ſide, when the Sons of *Belial* aſſociated and bandied againſt me, complotted and conſpired againſt me, ſaying, Come, let us blot her name out of the book of remembrance, they ſhall neither know nor ſee till we come in the midſt of them, and cauſe the work to ceaſe, I had been long ago overthrown and overturned. It was not my own bow or ſword ſaved me, but thy right hand that helped me out of all my diſtreſſes. It is our great duty to rejoyce in the confeſſion of Gods Name in all our deliverances and ſalvations; and to aſcribe to him the glory that is his right and due. This Pſalm is Euchariſtical, penned on purpoſe as a grateful acknowledgement. We ſhould erect ſtanding Monuments of his goodneſs and love, and ſay, *Hitherto hath he helped us*; ſhewing to the generations to come, the praiſes of the Lord, and the wonderful works he hath done for our ſouls, (*Pſal.* 66. 16. 71. 18. 78. 4, 5, 6.—That they might alſo hope in God—And (as there alwaies appears that in mercy, which calls aloud for praiſes) ſo there are ſome deliverances that have ſuch ſignal remarks upon them, as we cannot poſſibly paſs over without ſpecial obſervation. How oft does mercy come undeſerved, unexpected, undeſired and unprayed for, is diſtinguiſhing (we are pluckt as fire-brands out of the fire, and taken when others are left) yea exceeding and ſuperabundant to all our hopes or thoughts? How many deliverances

do we know, before we know our dangers? the danger was only to be read in the deliverance. How many mischiefs do we escape, that by all our forecast and prudence, we could never have prevented, nor yet by our power opposed? how many mercies come pouring upon us, not one of which by all our diligence and industry we could have purchased or procured? what good often ariseth to us out of our evils, and that proves our greatest advance, which we thought would have been our fatal and final downfall; and conduceth to our salvation, which seemed to promise nothing but utter and irrecoverable ruin and destruction. Gods mercies thus renewed on us every morning, and his faithfulness every moment, require a constant return of the sacrifices of thanksgiving; but our sin and misery is, that our thankfulness for mercy granted, is no way proportionable to our importunity for mercy wanted and desired. In our straits and afflictions we promise a great deal to the Almighty, but when once gotten out of those depths, we sacrilegiously rob the God of our salvation, and put him off with the farthing candle of a little lip-devotion instead of a thank-offering of heart and life, wherein only lies the life of thankfulness. But where there is an Ark for deliverance, there should be an Altar for thankfulness.

Secondly, Let this draw and engage us to a constant access to God in all conditions, under all emergencies and occurrences of providence. Go to this God for help at all times. Trust in him at all times, and pour forth your prayers before him. Have recourse to him for spirituals, to his

promises,

promiſes, for temporals, to his providence. Do your ſouls want pardon of ſin, peace of ſpirit, aſſiſtance to duty, ſtrength againſt corruptions, grace for trials and ſufferings, fly to your God. Does Satan tempt, the world frown, friends prove unkind, hopes diſappoint, all creatures fail, enemies compaſs you about, yet go to him your help, and cry with *David*, *Plead my cauſe (O Lord) with them that ſtrive with me, and fight with thoſe that fight againſt me.* Whatſoever condition befalls you, your ſtate is never hopeleſs, why ſhould it not then be fearleſs? never deſperate, why ſhould you be diſconſolate? There's hope at the bottom, *dum ſpiro ſpero*, may be your Motto. The Royal aid of Heaven will aſſiſt and enable you againſt all oppoſitions on Earth. Whom ſhould a people go to, but to their God? He is the confidence of the whole world; The Iſles ſhall wait upon him, and on his arm ſhall they truſt, *Iſa.* 51. 5. It's the great duty and ſafety too of the ſoul to truſt to and hope in the Lord. It's the character of a Saint to depend on God, *Pſal.* 33. 20. *Our ſoul waiteth on the Lord, for he is our help and ſhield.* It's a ſign of ſincerity, to truſt in the Lord, and the evidence of an Hypocrite, to truſt to any thing beſides him, *Job* 8. 15. *Iſa.* 14. 31. The poor of his people ſhall truſt in him; and *Zeph.* 3. 11. *Thou ſhalt leave in the midſt of them a poor afflicted people, and they ſhall truſt in the Name of the Lord.* Not patience, but faith is the higheſt commendation of a Chriſtian. This was *Hezekiahs* grand *Encomium* given him by the Spirit of God himſelf, 2 *King.* 18. 4. He truſted in the Lord God of *Iſrael*, and clave to him. God takes

pleaſure, and delights in them that hope in his mercy, *Pſal.* 147. 11. God hath curſed all creature-confidence. He hath pronounced them bleſſed, which hope in himſelf: Yea, Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed. It's the higheſt piece of honour and happineſs, that any created being is capable of, to receive influence from, and exerciſe dependance upon its Creator. There is an utter inſufficiency in all creatures to help; they may give painted comfort, ape a counterfeit happineſs, but never afford real or laſting conſolations. Yea, the ſoul may be reduced to ſuch ſtraits and exigencies, as all the power, wiſdom and induſtry of all creatures cannot give him relief, none but God help him (as under troubles of conſcience, and perplexity of ſpirit, none elſe can ſuccour.) A wounded ſpirit none can bear, and only God can heal. If help comes there, it muſt come ἄνωθεν, immediately from Heaven. Friends cannot help, Miniſters not help, experimental Chriſtians not help, prayers, tears, and duties not help, only the God of Heaven. And as he is ſometimes only able, ſo he is himſelf alwaies able, when none elſe can, either on the right hand, or on the left. It's all one with him to help by many, or by few, or by none at all. He can deſtroy by friends, making the Governours of *Judah* to their ſubjects, as well as their enemies, like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a ſheaf, ſo as they ſhall devour all people round about, on the right hand, and on the left. He can make the choiceſt and moſt hopeful inſtruments, to prove our vexers, and not our Saviours: He can cut off the

the ſpirit of Princes, and be terrible to the Kings of the Earth. An Hoſt without him, much more againſt him, is a vain thing for ſafety; and a multitude as inſignificant as a ſingle perſon; he can ſmite heaps upon heaps, with the touch of his little finger, as *Sampſon* did once the *Philiſtines* with the Jaw-bone of an Aſs: He can blow on the moſt likely projects uſed for help and ſupply, ſo as they ſhall utterly fail, *Jam.* 1. 11. The rich man ſhall fade away in his waies; not only the careleſs Prodigal in his waies of profuſeneſs, but the moſt careful Uſurer, diligent Merchant, induſtrious Trades-man in his waies of providence, to get the world. God can blaſt the faireſt hopes, and greateſt deſigns whatſoever. And as he can ruin by the hand of friends, ſo he can ſave by the hand of an enemy; when there is no healer unto a ſoul or people, he can, he can yet do the cure: what is deſigned and intended for evil, he can work good out of, and order for good to his People. And as he hath ability enough, ſo readineſs to work for his People. Though Father forſakes children, as *Herod* did his *Antipater*, and Husband Wife, as did *Henry* the eighth, and Prince his Favourites, as *Ahaſhuerus* did his ſubject *Mordecai*, and *Haman* his Courtier, yet he will never forſake his People. And he can facilly help too in the greateſt extremities. It's but a turn of his hand, a ſhine of his face, and look of his countenance, and we are ſaved. And he is a ſure, ſteady, and faithful help, that will ſtand by us to the end, and in the end. And have not our ſouls had plentiful experience? and is there any thing that can more fortifie and ſtrengthen faith,

than the remembrances of his paſt ſuccours? *Pſa.* 61. 3, 4. Oh therefore perſwade we our ſouls (by all theſe twiſted Arguments) and lay them under a perpetual and irrevocable obligation to hope in the Lord. O you that are young men, you that are old men (for the Pſalmiſt calls on all ſorts of men to truſt in the Lord) you that are coming into the world, make him the hope of your youth; and you that are going out of the world, make him the ſtaff of your age: You can never truſt God too much, nor the Creature too little. Hope in him for your bodies, for your ſouls, in good daies, in evil, under private evils, under publick. Are you caſt into a troubleſome world, (as indeed you are in this preſent generation) going to Sea in a ſtorm, never ſuch a ruffle in the world, yet caſt your Anchor on God. When your credits, eſtates, liberties, health, wealth, trade, religion, your all lies at the ſtake, ſtill depend upon him. In times of greateſt hurlyburly, diſtraction and confuſion, yet be found waiting for him and his ſalvation. Were you in priſon, in exile, in a wilderneſs, do not deſpair, Gods preſence is with his People whereſoever they are caſt: God can be with you in a priſon, as he was with *Joſeph*; in a dungeon, as with *Jeremiah*; in a Lions den, as with *Daniel*; nay, if you were in Hell with *Jonas*, he can make it an Heaven to you. God is with his to the end of the Earth; he can ſupply all your wants, even ſpread a table for you in the wilderneſs, relieve all your ſtraits, rid you out of all your dangers, deliver you from all your fears, do for you beyond your thoughts, deſires or hopes. Should, or does it go ill with

Sion?

Sion? are the Church and People of God low? do her enemies grow high, insolent and triumph? Is the Church upon the Cockboat of distractions? are there great disorders and confusions abroad, divisions and unsettlements at home, impediments in the way of reformation, so as ye look for peace, and no good comes, and for healing, but behold a time of trouble; go to God who governs the world, and the Church too. He steers the ship, and though now tossed with the tempestuous waves of animosity, pride, and contention, will yet command a calm, and bring it safely to shore. Deliverance shall come the way he hath appointed, and the day he hath determined too, if not this or that, yet another day, and another way. He hath made a standing promise, that no weapon formed against her shall prosper, *Isa.* 54. 17. And though *Gebal*, *Ammon*, and *Amaleck*, should joyn together their heads, hearts and hands, and unite in never so many deep contrivances, close conspiracies, and factious cunning stratagems, bold and daring attempts, strong combinations: Though Papists and Atheists, Jews, Turks and Devils, should all enter a league and confederacy, yet shall they be broken: though they dig as deep as Hell, the counsels of Heaven would undermine them, and divine providence counterwork them (*Isa.* 29. 15. Though they lay the train of never so cruel and politick a design, God would blow it up, and return the blisters upon their own faces. In the worst of times, it's your duty to hope for better; *hæc non durabunt ætatem.* God will give these an end also, he will create on every dwelling place of

Mount Sion ('tis a Goſpel-promiſe) and upon her Aſſemblies a cloud, and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night (as he did to *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, to whoſe pillar of cloud and fire the Prophet alludes.) For upon all the glory ſhall be a defence. And though there be never ſo many lets in the way of mercy, God is able to turn hinderances into furtherances, poyſons into medicines, deſtructions into deliverances. O therefore at all times and ſeaſons, in all caſes and conditions, go to God as your help and hope. And if you would know how to make your applications to him, and at what ſpecial times and ſeaſons you ſhould hope and depend upon him, take a ſhort account in a few particulars.

Firſt, What are the ſpecial ſeaſons we ſhould go to God in? I anſwer, no time is amiſs. There is as welcome going to God in a Sun-ſhine, as in a ſtorm. There is no time of addreſſe to God, but 'tis an accepted time. There may be a time when God will not be found, but never any when he will not be ſought. In time of felicity, when we ſit under the warming influence of gracious providence, God ſpreads a table for us, and our cups overflow with his goodneſs: This is one of the moſt noble, but yet one of the moſt difficult exerciſes of faith. When a man enjoys the fulneſs of the creature, yet to reſt purely upon the Creator. It was an high pitch of *Paul*, when having nothing, yet to be as having all things; but yet a far higher attainment, when having all things, yet to be as having nothing: This is one of the ſublimeſt acts faith can poſſibly exert. But the ordinary uſe of hope is in daies of adverſity,

when

when the ſoul eats the bread of carefulneſs, and drinks the wine of aſtoniſhment. When the waters come into his ſoul, and all Gods billows are ready to cover him, and ſwallow him up. A tempeſt is the ſeaſonable time for the Believer to throw out the anchor of his hope; eſpecially when a man is,

Firſt, Under purſuits of divine wrath. Gods terrours drink up his ſpirit; his arrows ſtick faſt in him, and his hand preſſeth him very ſore. While God is killing, his people ſhould be truſting. There's no way (under thoſe) but of running from God, unto God, from the bar of his Juſtice, to the Throne of his Grace; from him as an angry Judge, to him as a reconciled Father; from him as the deſtroyer of ſinners, to him as the Saviour of ſouls, and preſerver of his creatures. As the Malefactor fled to the City of Refuge, crying all along as he went, Refuge, Refuge, ſo ſhould the ſoul fly to God either under the pourings out of perſonal wrath, as the Prodigal to his Father, or offender to the Judge for pardon; or under the popular executions of his wrath on the world, as a Wife flies to her Husband for protection. When God is coming out againſt the world with ſword, fire, famine, or peſtilence, then 'tis our wiſdom to repair to him, who is an harbour in every tempeſt, a ſhelter in every ſtorm, a ſanctuary wherein the ſoul may ſecurely hide and repoſe under every ſtroke of divine vengeance.

Secondly, Under the oppreſſions of Satan, or oppoſitions of humane violence. Go as beggars to the Throne of Grace, to beg help in that time of need. When the Kite comes, get under the wings

wings of Gods Providence and presence. So Did *David*, *Psal.* 57. 1. *Psal.* 143. 8. *I fly to thee to hide me*: Thus *Luther*, *I will goe and tell my God.*

Thirdly, In the failure and disappointment of all Creatures, when all second Causes fail, then 'tis time to go to the first, and when the arm of flesh breaks, then to lay hold on the Father of Spirits. So *David*, Psal. 73. 23.— and 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. when he had lost his wives, yet he rejoyceth in God as his husband. So the Church, *Hab.* 3. 17.— As Gods solemn appearances for us, engage us to trust in Him, *Exod.* 14. *ult. Then they believed the Lord, and his servant* Moses. So do the Creatures appearances against us, and discouragements to us. This was the foundation of *Mordecai*'s conclusion of Faith, *Esth.* 4. 14.

Fourthly, Upon Imposition, or undertaking of extraordinary burdens, whether of service or suffering. Thus *Moses* goes to God for Eloquence when he was to go in to *Pharaoh*, and become his accuser and Gods advocate, spokesman for *Israel*. So *David* going out against *Goliah*, went out in the Name of the Lord, and *Jehosaphat*, when to combat with the *Ammonites* beggs help from Heaven. Our Saviour falls earnestly to Prayer when about to suffer. New services call for new Supplies, and great sufferings proportionable strength and support to carry us through them.

Fifthly, Under falls into deep and sore afflictions and distresses: As under surprizals by fears and dangers (what time we are afraid, trusting in him)

him) ſo under the feeling of piercing afflictions. *In my diſtreſs*, ſaith *David*, *I cried to the Lord, and out of the depths he heard me.* When the ſhipwrackt Soul cannot ſwim to ſhore, yet let him cry for help. The end God brings us into afflictions is that they might bring us to himſelf, that we might not truſt in our ſelves, but in him the living God. In times of perſonal diſtreſs or Viſitation, wants, weakneſſes, ſickneſſes, ſcandals, confinements, baniſhments from our houſe and home, and native ſoil, yea under the moſt cruel perſecutions, by tongue or hand, we may appeal with *Job* and *David* to Heaven, and have right done us. When the Soul is like *Noahs* Ark floating upon the top of theſe waters, it may reſt on God's holy Mountain. Thus we finde the Church betaking her ſelf to God, in an ill time, a time of general corruption, ſore oppreſſion, and extreme depopulation, *Mic.* 7. 7. though it was foul under feet, ſhe hopes to finde it fair above head; and while ſhe found nothing but a louring Earth, preſumes to ſpye a ſmiling Heaven. Our Saviour bids us, not in glorious times, but ſad, not hang down, but lift up our heads, *Luk.* 21. 28.

Sixthly, Under dying apprehenſions. Thus *David* flyes to Gods Covenant, and confirms by the freſh atteſtations of his Faith his Viſion with, and intereſt in his God, when to take his leave and farewell of all worldly intereſts, and the union between his body and ſoul was to receive its diſſolution. So holy *Job* when marching out of the world, goes out to his Redeemer. There is no ſuch time as a dying hour, to truſt in the

living

living God. And ſo much ſhortly to that firſt Qu ſtion.

Secondly, How muſt we make our addreſſes to God ſo as in an evil day to finde help from him: Eſpecially theſe five manner of wayes: Firſt, By Soul-abaſement and humiliation, acknowledging our own unworthineſs and inſufficiency, that we are leſs than the leaſt of all Gods mercies, unworthy any crumm that falls from his Providential Table. Indeed as long as we can ſtand upon our own leggs, we will not go to God. (The Childe as long as he can maintain himſelf, will not come home to his Father,) but when we are fallen, then we are glad of help: This is that hath always obtained with God for particular mercy and publick ſalvation; and hath been the conſtant carriage and behaviour of his people in their addreſſes to him, though they come to him boldly as to a Father, yet withall humbly as to their King. Thus the Centurion, *I am not worthy thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof.* Thus the Prodigal, *Father, I have ſinned againſt thee, and againſt Heaven:* So the Woman of *Canaan*, *Truth Lord, the dogs*, &c. So in publick ſuits, *Abraham* comes not with duſt and aſhes on his head only, but in his mouth alſo, when a ſolicitor for *Sodom*. *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel*, preſent themſelves with great humiliation before God, when praying for the people. So the Princes of *Iſrael* when captivated by *Shiſhak* humble themſelves, and ſay, *the Lord is righteous*, 2 *Chron.* 12. 6, 7. and ſo the Church, *Iſa.* 64. 7. When ſhe ſtirs up her ſelf to take hold upon God, ſhe confeſſeth he had hid his face from her for her ſins,

ſins, and conſumed her for her iniquities. *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiſeth up them that be bowed down*, Pſal. 145. 14. If we would finde acceptance with God, we muſt go to him, as that good King, *Lord, we know not what to doe*. Lord, I am under ſuch a guilt, under ſuch a temptation, under ſuch a want, or affliction, and I know not what to doe, but mine eyes are towards thee. And that's the ſecond, with renunciation of all Creature-helps, and carnal confidences: God never loves to give his people mercy, till they know not where to have it elſe; when they know not what to do, then he will let them know what he can do. Thus the Church goes to God, *Jer.* 3. 23, 24.— and *cap.* 14. 22. and ſo *Iſa.* 26. 13.— When all our Ciſterns are dried up, then is a fit time for God to open the windows of Heaven. If we would have Soul-help we muſt deny our ſelves, and diſclaim all creature-props, and ſtayes, ordinances, duties, graces, priviledges, and if outward help, we muſt abandon all Creature-dependencies. The hand muſt be firſt emptied, that receives any gifts of grace and mercy from Heaven.

Thirdly, By Prayer and Invocation. Its Gods promiſe in leading his people to their reſting place, that *with weeping and ſupplications he would lead them*, Jer. 31. 9. *Aſa* in his great ſtrait goes to God by Prayer, and beggs and implores help, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *He cried unto the Lord, and ſaid, Help us, O Lord our God.* So *Hezekiah*, *Lord, undertake for me.* The Apoſtle directs us to the throne of grace for help, which *Paul* attending found this anſwer, *My grace is ſufficient.* Prayer

is

is the bucket of Heaven. It's the Pſalmiſts little River in the City of God, *Pſal.* 46. At which come up all the ſouls goods. *I ſought the Lord, and he heard me*, Pſal. 34. 4. *Then ſhall ye pray unto me— and I will give you an expected end*, Jer. 29. *For all theſe things I will be inquired of by the houſe of Iſrael*, Ezek. 36. 37. Prayer is the condition of mercy: We muſt call, though we never ſo fully expect. If we ſtop our mouths, God will ſtop his hand; and leave off asking, God will leave off giving and granting. Sometimes God is found of thoſe who ſeek him not, (*poteſt inveniri, non perveniri*) as to the firſt grace, but having once given his Spirit, he will be ſought of all that finde him. Prayer is *vehiculum divinæ miſericordiæ*, the Chariot in which the King of Heaven comes down graciouſly into our ſouls. Prayer indeed cannot haſten mercy as to Gods time, but it may as to ours; not as to the time he hath appointed (but his Promiſe being conditional) it may as to the time by us expected. And the aſſurance of mercy ſhould not prevent duty, but enforce it: the certainty of the end, eſtabliſheth and confirms the uſe of the means. If we would have mercy from God, we muſt not be too proud or ſhameface't to beg it, but take words with us, and ſay, *Take away iniquity, and receive us graciouſly*. When we are laid by affliction flat on our backs, then have we a fit opportunity to look up to Heaven, and ſay, Behold us, O Lord, look upon us, and our afflictions, remember the troubles and ſorrows of our hearts, come and heal us, and help us; for thou alone art our ſtay and truſt, our ſuccour and ſupport, our prop and

and pillar, our only help and hope. God hath made many large and excellent promiſes to prayer under perſonal, and alſo publick calamities, 2 *Chron.* 7. 14. *If my people pray* —— And *Jehoſaphat* urgeth this promiſe in prayer, 2 *Chron.* 20. 9. *If when evil comes on us -- and we cry to thee in our affliction, then hear and help.* God knows how to give out mercy, but he will have this homage of us, firſt, to ask, and then will not, cannot deny, *Luk.* 18. 7. *Quanto magis?*

Fourthly, By faith and believing. He that ſpeeds in his acceſſes muſt believe. As prayer muſt be made, ſo faith muſt be acted. He gives grace and glory to them that truſt in him. Faith trades at Heaven, and fetcheth in large incomes of mercy. Prayer may knock and beg for mercy, but faith receives it, though not as *manus laborantis*, yet, *mendicantis*. An unbeliever can receive nothing from the Lord. Faith is to prayer, as fire to powder; the piece will not off without it, nor make any report. Without faith wings it, prayer can never reach Heaven, and therefore not bring down any thing thence. Prayer is the ſhip, but faith the wind, whereby we muſt ſail to the cape of good hope. Faith without prayer, is but a bold *bravado*, or daring preſumption; Prayer without faith, is but a beating the Air, an uncertain ſound, or vain canting in the ears of Heaven.

Fifthly, By returning reſolutions. He that would come to God, ſo as to obtain mercy, muſt reſolve ſo to come, as never to depart from him more by iniquity. *O Iſrael, return to the Lord,* ſaith the Prophet, *from whom thou haſt fallen,* Hoſ. 14. 1.

So

So *Jer.* 18. 11. *Behold I frame evil, and deviſe a device againſt you, return you now every man from his evil way, and make your waies and your doings good.* There is no coming to God to beg only further liberty of ſinning againſt him. *I will hear,* ſaith *David, what God will ſpeak, for he will ſpeak peace to his People, and his Saints, but let them not turn again to folly.* God will never beſtow his ſalvation for us, to make it only a fomentation to our corruption. When *Iſrael* kept cloſe to God, then he helped them when in all their ſtraits and calamities they called upon him; but when they rebelled againſt him, he gave them up into the hand of the Nations. Surely his ſalvation is nigh them that fear him, and keep his Covenant; a penitent, humble, obedient frame, is requiſite in all our approaches to Heaven; a turning to God with faſting, weeping and mourning, a reſolve to offer him the calves of our lips. The Prophet hath it excellently, *Iſa.* 21. 12. We muſt enquire, return and come. Such approaches to God alwaies are welcome to him, and ſucceſsful to his People. That's the ſecond.

Thirdly, This is a ground of ſatisfaction and acquieſcence to the People of God. His help may be ſufficient to give our ſouls contentment under all the fails or wants of the creature. The Apoſtle (in that holy paradox) bids us be careful for nothing, not anxiouſly -- but in every thing make our requeſts known to God with prayer and thankſgiving -- *Phil.* 4. 6. Duty and ſervice is our work, care and providence Gods. The child takes no care, becauſe he hath a Father to provide for him; nor is the Wife ſollicitous,

becauſe ſhe is provided for by her Husband; we muſt not μεριμνᾶν, diſtract our hearts with needleſs fears and cares about worldly reliefs or comforts; μὴ ταραχθῆτω, was our Saviours caution, let not your hearts be roiled, as waters with ſtirring, or troubled, as a ſhip with toſſing. *Nec habeo, careo, aut curo,* may be the Chriſtians Motto. We ſhould not envy wicked mens fulneſs, when as we have an intereſt in Gods Alſufficiency; nor neceſſitate him for lower bleſſings, when he hath given us the better part. Holy *Jacob* was brought to an excellent pitch of contentation, upon his experience and obſervation of providence, when he vowed to God, that if God would be with him, and keep him in the way he was to go, and give him but bread to eat, and rayment to put on, then the Lord ſhould be his God, *Gen.* 28. 20. If God gives us neceſſaries, why ſhould we ſtand on ſuperfluities? Let me ask thy ſoul (Chriſtian) but this one queſtion, whether thou wouldeſt part with thy hope of an intereſt in thy God for all the world? And if God hath given thee the beſt things, why ſhouldeſt thou doubt or diſtruſt his providence for the worſt? why doubt ye, O ye of little faith? does God provide for Ravens, and will he not provide for his Sons and Daughters? he that feeds the Sparrows, and cloaths the Lillies, will never ſee his children ſtarve or periſh. It's ſtrange to ſee how carnal men can truſt their Mammon of the world, and yet Chriſtians cannot truſt the everliving God. Strange, that we can truſt God with our ſouls, and yet hardly truſt him with our bodies. This ſpeaks a living by ſenſe, more than

by faith: ſtrange, that we could truſt him before we knew him in a way of gracious acquaintance with him; and now doubt him, when we have had ſuch plentiful experience of him? They who know his Name ſhould truſt in him.

Fourthly, This lies a juſt ground for return unto God for all receipts of help and influence from him. Grace ſhould aſcend, where it does deſcend; priviledge asks ſervice. *What ſhall I render?* ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 116.12. It was charged on *Hezekiah*, that he returned not to the Lord according to the benefit done to him (the help afforded him againſt the King of *Aſſyria.*) 2 *Chron.* 32. 25. But who can give to the Lord? or what can man be profitable to his Maker? Indeed we have nothing worthy his acceptance; all our duties have no further value in them, than what grace puts upon them: as gilded and enamel'd with his gracious acceptation in Chriſt, ſo they become only beautiful and precious in his ſight. But though God expects no full compenſation, he doth a right and juſt improvement. And there is but a twofold way of improvement. By ſtudying the advance of Gods honour and glory, and communicating to the wants and neceſſities of our Brethren.

Firſt, For Gods glory. Does the Lord help us? it's but reaſonable we ſhould help him. Let us help him againſt the mighty: but God ſtands in no need of our help; he will maintain his own cauſe, we may let God alone to govern the world: yet we finde God himſelf once asking the queſtion, *Pſal.* 94, 16. *Who ſhall riſe up for me againſt the evil doers? who ſhall ſtand up for me againſt the workers*

workers of iniquity? Who is on my ſide? who? The cauſe and intereſt of God ſometimes is leaning, ſeems falling; and though God does not need our help, yet he ſometime requires it, not chuſing to act in a more immediate way, but like the Maſter, ſtands and looks on, while his men do his work. And we may be aſſured, God will take it very heinouſly, if we ſee it carted for want of putting to our ſhoulders. O let us then be zealous for God, and appear for his cauſe, truth and glory; appear in our places againſt ſin, and for holineſs. As we would ever have God appear for us at the laſt day, when he comes out againſt the world; ſo let us appear for God in our day, when the world are going out againſt him. With what face or confidence dare we look God in the face at judgement, and deſire him to ſtand then by us, when our conſciences ſhall accuſe us? Time was when we would not ſtand by him, or venture any thing for him, and tell us withall, that he that denies Chriſt before men, he will deny before his Father in Heaven.

Secondly, For our Brethrens ſupply. As we have received, ſo let us communicate. Communicate to other poor ſouls that need our help. When converted our ſelves, we ought to ſtrengthen our Brethren. The world is for uſe, not for enjoyment, grace for both: We are not owners, only Stewards of thoſe talents God hath concredited, and he will expect an account of us, according to our receipts ought to be our diſburſements; and never did any ſoul loſe by his layings out for God, but he ſufficiently reimburſed him. The liquor of mercy is on purpoſe put by God

into broken Veſſels, that it might run out to others. We ſhould do what in us lies to hand Chriſt and Grace, thoſe gifts of God to our Brethren; our Lamps ſhould be filled with Oyl, that others might borrow of us, at leaſt light from us. It was *Jobs* commendation, that he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; he fed them with his morſels, cloathed them with his raiment, harboured them in his houſe, *Job* 31. It's much more our duty to endeavour the illumination of blind minds, and recovery of lame ſouls, and help them by the crutches of our prayers, tears, and counſels, who cannot as yet ſtep without them. If our neighbours beaſt be in the ditch, we ought to help him out, and much more his ſoul, when about plunging into Hell. When one neighbours houſe is on fire, all the neighbour-hood will contribute their beſt ability to quench it, and ſhall we not lend our helping-hand to extinguiſh the flames of divine wrath, which our Brothers ſoul hath already kindled upon him, and wherein he is like to burn elſe to all eternity? And as graceleſs ſinners ſtand in need of our help, ſo oftentimes do comfortleſs Saints; they are weary and heavy laden, and would be glad of a lift at their burden. To a man afflicted, pity ſhould be ſhown of his friend. No truer ſign of grace than a compaſſionate ſenſe of the wounds of a troubled conſcience; and no ſurer ſign of a deſperate mind, devoted to deſtruction, than a want of ſympathy with them. The end God comforts us, is, that we may comfort others? 2*Cor.* 1.4. And he expects, being our ſelves converted, we ſhould ſtrengthen our Brethren; we ſhould not be ciſterns, to keep

all in, but conduits to let run out our gifts, graces and experiences to others. It's the rareſt Art in the world, to comfort afflicted conſciences; every Chriſtian ſhould endeavour to be well skill'd in it. By diſtributions of grace and comfort to others, we ſhall become gainers, and loſe no more than the Sun does of light, or the Fountain of water, by affording us their beams and ſtreams. *Virtus eundo creſcit.* Natural motions may ſpend, but this ſpiritual increaſeth. It's pity the talents of grace ſhould ever lie dead by us, and ſuch holy uſury and improvement alwaies brings in the greateſt increaſe, and largeſt revenue. And indeed a Chriſtian hath no more grace, than he well improves for Gods glory, and his own and others good. And as we muſt communicate to others ſouls, ſo to their outward conditions too that need our help. *Feed the hungry, cloath the naked*—As we have opportunity, do good to all men, with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed. *Charge them* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that are rich, that they be ready to diſtribute*— *And he that hath this worlds goods, and ſeeth his Brother need, and hath no compaſſion on him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* The merciful is bleſſed, and he ſhall finde mercy, but let him never expect mercy from God, that hath no mercy for man. God will one day ſhut his heart as cloſe as ever he did his purſe, and ſtraiten his bowels to him, as he did his bounty to his Brethren. The bill at the laſt day runs in negatives, and God will cauſe both the gallant and worldly muck-worm, ſhortly to know, that he gave them eſtates, not to lay out on their backs and bellies; and monies, not barely to trade with,

and treaſure up for their followers, but to do good with in their generations by acts of piety and charity as occaſion was offered them. Chriſt will go on the other ſide from their Souls another day, who now paſſed on the other ſide with a bare naked view of their Brethrens bleeding condition. It was good *Nehemiahs* glory, That he did not oppreſs the poor, but relieve them. It will be a fearfull cry againſt rich hoarders at the laſt day, which all the cravings, and ſtarvings of the poor amongſt them will ſend out againſt them. The Apoſtle gives us a report of it, *Jam.* 5. 4, 5. *Pure Religion and undefiled is to viſit the fatherleſs and widow, and to keep a mans ſelf unſpotted in the World.* It's reported of the Deer, that they in ſwimming over a River help each other by leaning on one anothers backs, and when the formoſt be weary he comes hindmoſt. And the ſtory of the Belly in the Fable is not unknown. So ſhould we help each other in our paſſage to Heaven.

Fifthly, Let this be a ground of confidence in God under all trialls and troubles; let us not caſt away our confidence, for it hath a ſure foundation, and therefore ſhall have great recompenſe of reward: Let us not deſpond, but depend on God for help in all our ſtraits: *lift up our eyes to the heavens, whence cometh our help*, as the Pſalmiſt chath it, *Pſal.* 121. 1, 2. Not that we ſhould not make uſe of all lawfull means, under trouble, and do like him (who being plunged into a ditch, would not ſtirre, but ſtay till God helpt him out). This is to tempt God, and not to truſt him. *Qui vitat molam, vitat farinam.*

Reliance

Reliance on the first Cause destroyes not the use of the second. There is a great deal of difference between using of means and resting on them: As it's evil to use means, and not rest on God, (this is carnal confidence) so it's vain to depend on God out of the use of Means, (that's daring presumption). Though God hath determin'd all states, conditions and changes, notwithstanding his decrees, a man may starve for want of food, and die for want of Physick too. God hath decreed necessary means in order to such and such ends, and he that would obtain the mercy God hath promised, must use the means he hath appointed. But notwithstanding this Caution, we must not so look down on the Valley, as not withall, yea, chiefly and principally to look up to the Hills, nor so view Earth, as not in the mean time (with that Cardinal) to have leisure to look up to Heaven. O 'tis a sweet thing to see our mercies and supplies coming from Gods right hand, and dropping to us from Heaven. Happy it is in all conditions to have a God to fly to, and to incourage our selves in. When we are reduced to great straits, and all the World seems to be in an uproar, and blended in a Chaos of confusion, and we are amuzed and amazed, then to have a God to repose and confide in, is an infinite mercy. O learn we to trust and hope in this our God at all times: Who would not trust this God, who is so able and so ready to help? Trust him for your selves, with your Bodies, your Estates, your Souls, your all: Trust him for the Church; trust him in time of mens fiercest per-

ſecution; truſt him in time of his own immediate viſitations.

But it may be you will object and ſay, we are unworthy of any ſuch help or influence, and therefore cannot put forth ſuch confidence. But remember, God do's all for his people *gratis*, all graciouſly from firſt to laſt, for his Names ſake: He bloſs out iniquities, heals backſlidings, repairs his peoples breaches, and all for his Names ſake. Take one place for all, *Iſa.* 48. 9. *For my Names ſake will I deferre mine anger*— This is the grand argument Gods people inſiſt on in all their applications for mercy, *Jer.* 14.— *Dan.* 9. And the flagg of defiance he hung out, and the ſtanding challenge he made to *Iſrael* in all his Benefactions to them, *Not for your ſakes*—— Conſideration of our unworthineſs (if ſenſible of it, and rightly affected with it) is ſo far from being a diſcouragement, that it ſhould be to us rather an encouragement to come to God on all occaſions, whether for our ſpiritual, or our temporal eſtates and conditions. God is worthy to give, and will not ſay as *Alexander* once, when one asked him a groat, that that was too little for a King to give, and a talent too much for a Beggar to receive, but will give like a King, like a God, though we be never ſo unworthy to receive. Free grace delights to triumph in ſinners unworthineſs.

But it may be, unbelief will object and ſay, It's in vain, we have waited a long time upon the Lord for help, and none comes, for ſtrength under ſuch a temptation, for comfort under ſuch an affliction, for deliverance out of ſuch and ſuch ſtraits

ſtraits and trialls, for ſalvation for his Church and people, but yet no ſign of his coming, the Chariot-wheels of mercy draw heavily: God hath forſaken us, there is no hope, why ſhould we wait on the Lord any longer? Notwithſtanding all this (my Soul) It's good to hope, and quietly to wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.

In anſwer to this cavil, conſider but, Firſt, That God do's not always work according to our platform. We would chalk out the way of Providence, limit the holy one of *Iſrael*, preſcribe to Omnipotency and Eternity for the time and manner of our deliverance: but this is to go beyond our laſt, over-ſawcy boldneſs, and malepert preſumption. Who art thou O man, that wouldſt ſit at God's Councel-table, or become his Director? Shall the Clay preſcribe to the Potter his way of workmanſhip? God do's all things in infinite wiſdom and holineſs, and works all things according to the Counſel of his own will. God indeed is a ſure help to his People, yet he do's not always help them, perfectly, viſibly, or preſently.

Firſt, Not perfectly, mercy is at firſt an Embryo, and Infant, before it comes to any ſtature and proportion. The motions of Providence are great (God is doing many things at once, and one deſign is lodged in the boſom of another) and therefore ſlow, though ſure. Providence is forced to ride circuit, go farre about, before it can effect and accompliſh Gods intended purpoſes; and oft the furtheſt way about proves the neereſt home. We muſt not (as *Luther* was wont to ſay) judge of God's Comical Tragedies before the laſt act.

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The Picture though a rude draught at firſt, before the Limner hath done with it, becomes a poliſhed piece. God do's (as that famous Painter anſwered, when he was taxed for his tediouſneſs in drawing *Venus*'s Picture) *æternitati pingere*, carries on a deſign for Eternity, by all the preſent revolutions of Providence, which though the blinde World cannot now behold the beauty of, yet at the laſt day will appear glorious to the view of men and Angels.

Secondly, Not viſibly. Gods Providence oft, when it works for a man, ſeems to work againſt him. *Jacob* thought all things were againſt him, when all went well on his ſide. It was a good obſervation of *Luther*, that God uſeth to work by contraries for his Church, to bring light out of darkneſs, and Heaven out of Hell. Gods ways are often in the Deep, and his paths hidden and unknown. *Thou hideſt thy ſelf, O God of* Iſrael, *the Saviour.* The Devil firſt comes with the ſweeteſt, and at laſt with the ſharpeſt; God on the contrary makes a ſad beginning, but a bleſſed and comfortable end. —— *ye have ſeen the end of the Lord.* God indeed uſually comes to the wicked firſt with a bleſſing, and laſt with a judgement, but to his people firſt with a judgement, and laſt with a bleſſing. The wicked have the top of the Cup of mercy, but the dregs of that of wrath: The Saints ſip of the Cup of wrath, but have the bottom of that of mercy. Now the further off the approaches of mercy are, the more inviſible. The Prophet ſpeaks of the *Interſtitium* between the Law, and the Goſpel, that it ſhould be a day half dark and half light, *Zech.* 14. 8.

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And 'tis alwayes darkeſt and coldeſt a little before break of day: We are no competent Judges of divine operations. God was in that place, and *Jacob* knew it not; we often fear a Devil of fury, when there's nothing but an Angel of mercy, and look not on that ſide of the Picture, which hath the face of a beautifull Virgin, but the other that hath the affrighting look of an ugly and deformed Monſter. *Manoah*, when God came to viſit him, thought he came to murder him: when God comes to comfort us, then we are well-pleaſed, but let him come to humble, refine and purge, better and reform us, then we cry out Undone. We are ſenſible when he gives us fuller aſſurance, but not when he works in us more holineſs. So let Chriſt appear in his glory in his Church, let him give her a Year of Jubilee, then her Children lift up their heads; but let him appear in the prefiguring ſigns, and ſhake all Nations, come with Fire and Sword, then mens hearts tremble for fear, and ſcarce is faith to be found in the Earth. But the infinitely wiſe God hath private Channels and Conveyances of grace, which are not a whit leſs ſure, becauſe more hidden and ſecret.

And thirdly, not preſently. As God works not according to our modell, ſo he takes his own time. That leads to the ſecond. He alwayes obſerves not, nay ſeldom or never our time. Chriſt would do nothing before his hour came. It is not for us to know the times and ſeaſons which God hath reſerved in his own Power. *All things ſhall* (not do at preſent) *work together for good*; take the whole piece, when finiſht, and it will appear excel-

excellent. God hath an appointed time, which once come, mercy ſhall ſtay no longer. *Exod.* 12. *ult. The very ſame day Iſrael went out of* Egypt *by their armies.* In that inſtant *Daniel* was praying, the ſeventy weeks being determined; comes a Dove with a Letter in its wing, an Angel flying to him with intelligence of the return of their Captivity. There is a ſet time when he will have mercy on *Sion.* God ſent his Son in the fulneſs of time. When the *Ammorites* ſins be full, he will judge them, though it be four hundred years firſt, he had not forgotten them; one day with him is as a thouſand, and a thouſand years but as yeſterday, as a Watch in the night. And when Gods peoples graces be at the full, he will then come and ſave them. He gathers his fruit when once ripe. God does not alwayes ride poſt, or mercy come on the wing, but though it be long firſt, it ſhall ſurely come at laſt, and the longer in coming, the better and more welcom; mercies ſoon ripe are ſoon rotten, ſoon gotten ſoon loſt; but thoſe which coſt us dear, and are the fruit of many prayers, tears and ſorrows, and reſults of much faith and hope, waiting and patience, are ſweeteſt and ſureſt, our *Benjamins* and moſt beloved darlings. God hath bound himſelf by promiſe to his people for the thing, but not for the time, and he does not therefore obſerve the ſooneſt but the ſeaſonableſt time, nor ſo conſider our need, as not alſo to reſpect our fitneſs, and ſo his own glory. He can work when he pleaſeth: *Nullum tempus occurrit Regi*— and if he does not when we deſire, it's but a juſt requital; for as his time was not ours in coming to him,

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ſo 'tis but equal our time ſhould not be his in coming to us. But yet his delaies are no denials, and mercy may be neareſt, when it ſeems furtheſt off: Faith knows Gods time is the beſt, and is willing to ſtay for its portion, till he pleaſeth to pay it; alwaies ſaying, *Not mine, but thy will be done.* If God comes not *ad horam*, he will *ad ſalutem*: the longer the Phyſick remains in the body of the Patient, the more effectual will be its operation: And the longer the veſſel of prayer be gone, the greater lading it brings with it, when it once comes home. Haſty births commonly miſcarry, and how ſad a caſe will it be to loſe a mercy, or have it ſpoiled, and have half a mercy inſtead of it, for want of a little longer waiting? The Souldier will be vexed to purpoſe, if he delivers the Caſtle, when as if he had ſtaid but a few daies longer, relief had come certainly. What gat *Saul* by poſting the Sacrifice before *Samuel* came? It might have cut him to the heart, if it did not to think, that had he waited but a few daies longer, he had ſaved both his life and his Kingdom. Impatience hath loſt or impaired many a mercy. God will grant our patient, ſober, ſubmiſſive requeſts, but never in mercy our reſtleſs and too importunate deſires. Theſe make him often give us royal favours in anger, and let his wrath enter our ſouls, while yet our meat is in our mouths. The Church had learnt better manners, than to be ſo haſty, ſo quick and ſnatching, *Iſa.* 26. 9. *In the way of thy Judgements have we waited for thee.* It's too great a boldneſs to make our watch a rule for Gods Sun; our ſeeming diſtructions often uſher in our deliverance, and

and our too great haſte for deliverance oft proves our deſtruction.

But thirdly, We may ſay, our caſe is ſad, our miſery great, we are under ſore trials and temptations, have met with many diſappointments, ſo as we have no hope, our caſe is deſperate, our diſeaſe is grown incurable. To which I anſwer, the ſadder our condition, the more hope. The greater mans miſery, the more Gods pity, and deeper our affliction, the higher his affection. It's the more honour to God to work, when others have thrown it up; and the greater glory to this heavenly Phyſitian to do the cure when 'tis grown *opprobrium medicorum*, the ſcorn to all others. God delights to come in at a ſtrait, to know his People in a day of adverſity: To ſtay till all our power be gone, our hope periſhed, and we have given over praying, ſeeking, waiting, hoping and expecting, and given up all for loſt, that ſo he may have wherewithall to ſet all his Attributes on work at once; his power, wiſdom, goodneſs and mercy. When *Iſrael* had committed a great ſin, yet *Ezra* comforts them with this, There is yet hope in *Iſrael.* Art thou troubled with the guilt of ſin, defilement, and power of corruption? art thou diſturbed with fears, doubts, temptations? doſt thou want the evidence of Gods favour, and bleſſed aſſurances of his love? art thou preſſed down with the weight of thy afflictions? do thy feet ſtick in the mire, and thy ſoul is born down, and ſinks through the load that is upon thy ſhoulders? yet look up by faith to Heaven; God can open a door of hope in this valley of *Achor.* Lo he is behind the curtain, though thou ſeeſt him not, and will

will ſtep in and help thee, if he ſees the ſwoon or faint. He is *præſto*, ready at hand to ſave thee; though he ſeems to ſleep, he and his arm can awake (*Iſa.* 51. 9.) as a mighty man out of ſleep, for his enemies confuſion, and eke his Peoples conſolation. He will ariſe, *Pſal.* 44. *ult.* He can turn thy captivity as the ſtreams of the South, and a word of his mouth ſhall do it, as well as an act of his hand. Be not diſcouraged or deſpondent, but wait his approach. Though thy heart fail, be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen thine heart. Thou haſt an omnipotent arm to lean upon, therefore give not in, nor give over. Still be found in the way of thy duty, pray ſtill, believe, wait ſtill, and for ever hope in the Lord and his mercy. God oft ſuggeſts his Creatorſhip in Scripture to encourage his People in great extremities. As to *Jacob*, *Iſa.* 40. 27, 28. So *Pſal.* 124. *ult.* *Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.* And thus in this preſent Pſalm, in the words following the Text: Which made Heaven and Earth, to teach us, that God can do any thing, who made all things. What is it God cannot do, as well as he did create the world out of nothing? What ſhould we doubt in his way of providence, whoſe power we have ſuch demonſtrative proof of in the work of creation? And the Apoſtle *Peter* ſeems to make that relation ſpeak mercy too, as well as power, and goodneſs as greatneſs, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. Where he exhorts Saints in a ſuffering condition, to commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well doing, as into the hand of a faithful Creator. This title alone ſpeaks comfort and aſſurance to

Gods

Gods People, and abundant incouragement to wait and hope in him: not crying out in their paſſions, I ſhall one day fall by the hand of this evil; but ſtaying themſelves on him in the worſt of humane miſeries and calamities. Let me leave it with this *Memento*, That thy condition is not ſuch, neither can ever any ſuch ſtate befall thee, that either God hath not holpen in, or cannot help in. No temptations betide thee, but what are common to the Saints; and ſhould there, God can do that he never did, as well as thou need that none ever had; and being thy God and Creator, thou mayeſt be ſure his help ſhall alway be ſufficient to thy needs, for he will not forſake the work of his hands. He can work, and none ſhall let him. He that ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was ſo in the world*, can ſay, Let there be grace, peace, comfort, and there ſhall be ſo in the heart; Let there be truth and peace, and there ſhall be ſo in the Church. If God be your help, then make him your hope in all conditions and caſes, publick or private. Hath God broken your eſtates, your families, or man ruined them? God can repair them: Hath he broken his Church and People, broken down her hedge, ſo that the Boar of the Wood doth waſte her, and all the wild beaſts of the Forreſt devour her? he can yet look down upon her, and raiſe her up when loweſt, and throw down her enemies when higheſt. Let the houſe of *Aaron* and *Levi*, yea, and all that fear the Lord, truſt in the Lord, and ye that have no helper, make him your hope and help. Say, This God is our God, and ſhall be our guide to death. I ſhall diſmiſs this branch of

Application

Application, with an anſwer to theſe two Queſtions.

Firſt, What are the conditions upon which we may challenge help from God in an evil day?

Secondly, What are the times and ſeaſons when we may moſt confidently expect it? All evils are reduceable to two general heads. They are either Gods immediate viſitations, or humane afflictions and perſecutions. The former of theſe I ſhall anſwer with ſpecial reference to the firſt, the latter to the ſecond.

Firſt, On what terms may Gods People expect help, when he is going out in the way of his Judgements, as Sword, Peſtilence, &c? I ſhall but name theſe five conditions, (the diſcourſe being ſwoln far beyond what it was intended.)

Firſt, A religious ſeverity, which conſiſts in an accurate walking before God in a day of proſperity and mercy; a ſetting ſtrait ſteps to his Kingdom, a cleaving to him, a dwelling in him as our habitation, a maintaining ſtrict and cloſe communion with him, *Iſa.* 32. 17. The effect of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever. Communion with God in a good day, layes a ſure foundation for confidence in him in an evil. He that remembers God in his high eſtate, God will remember him in his low; that makes God his ſong in Sun-ſhine daies, ſhall finde him his ſtrength in tempeſtuous times; who give God a room in their hearts and houſes in times of felicity, ſhall have room in his Ark in the day of adverſity, *Gen.* 6. 8, 9. *Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord*; he was a juſt man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God.

Whereas, they who forſake God in the time of mercy, he will forſake them in the time of extremity; thoſe who now turn the back on him, he will then turn the face from, *Jer.* 18. 17. As they gave a deaf ear to the voice of his mercy, ſhutting the door of their hearts to him, he will give a deaf ear to the voice of their cry, and ſhut the door of his grace on them, *Prov.* 1. 24. This alſo conſiſts in an immunity from the ſins of the times; not only a ſympathy of their ſufferings, but a freedom from their ſins and defilements. When a Chriſtian ſaves himſelf from a perverſe generation, is unſpotted with the times, keeps his garments fair, though he lives in a contagious Air, yet preſerves himſelf free from its infection; and like the fiſh keeps the freſhneſs of his grace, though ſwimming in the ſalt-waters of ſin and wickedneſs. When out of an holy and reverential fear he dares not comply with, but withſtands, oppoſes, proteſts, witneſſes againſt, and mourns for the abominations of the times. This was *Noahs* carriage, being warned of God, and moved with an holy fear of his threatned Judgements, he makes an Ark, *Heb.* 11. 7. which the prophane and ſecure world flouted and derided. This was *Lots* ſecurity in the overthrow of *Sodom*, his ſoul was vexed with their filthy converſation, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. And the Apoſtle makes him a preſident, his deliverance a ruling caſe, ſo as to argue and draw up a firm concluſion from it for all the godly under like circumſtances, *verſe* 9. This tenderneſs of conſcience was that which removed *Joſiah* out of the dint of ſuffering, 2 *King.* 22. 19.— Jealouſie of ſinning, is the beſt ſecurity againſt ſuffering. Such

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as fear Gods Name, ſhall have the bright ſide of the cloud, when others have the dark; he will be to them a Sun, when to the reſt a fire. This holy carriage protected *Jeremiah*, and kept him out of captivity; and exempted *Baruch*, and gave him his life for a prey. Gods mourners, who gave him their teſtimony, by wearing his livery, ſhall alſo have his mark of diſtinguiſhing favour, *Ezek.* 9. They are pluckt as brands out of the fire. We may invert that of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, and make the ſubject the predicate, *cap.* 7. 16. They who are as Doves of the Valleys mourning for their iniquity, ſhall eſcape. They who feared the Lord, and thought on his Name (minded Religion, and made it their buſineſs) had a book of remembrance written, *Mal.* 3. 16. *Phinehas*'s zeal procures him the covenant of Gods peace, *Numb.* 25. 8.

Secondly, A fiducial recumbency. God ſaves them that truſt in him, and becauſe they truſt in him, *Pſal.* 37. *ult.* He that believes ſhall never be confounded. God is a buckler to them that truſt in him, *Prov.* 2. 8. The ſcope of the whole 91 *Pſalm*, is to aſſure preſervation to them that exerciſe faith in God, and keep *in viis*, in waies of ſtrict and cloſe walking with him: Not an abſolute faith, that God certainly will protect and deliver (for that cannot be without a ſpecial revelation) but a ſtedfaſt faith, and firm dependance on God, and his power and providence, both as able and willing to do it. *Jobs* confidence in God gave him aſſurance of his being his ſalvation. This obtained a ſpecial priviledge for *Obedmelech*, *Jer.* 39. *ult.* *Thy life ſhall be for a prey to thee, becauſe thou haſt put thy truſt in me, ſaith the Lord.* And this gave *Daniel* a

marvelous, yea miraculous protection, *Dan.* 6. 22, 23. Innocency was found in him, and he believed in his God.

Thirdly, A praying importunity. When Gods Spirit is poured out from on high, and his ſtir up themſelves to take hold on God, plead and wraſtle, call and cry, being his remembrancers day and night, *Pſal.* 32. 6. And ſo *Zeph.* 2. 3. *Seek the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his Judgement, ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs: it may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lords anger.* In the moſt deſolating Judgements God reſerves a remnant, and they are the ſeeking, praying ones, *Joel* 2. *ult. Whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord, ſhall be delivered.* So *Pſal.* 91. 14, 15.

Fourthly, A perfect and exact integrity. He ſaves the upright in heart, *Pſal.* 7. 10. He compaſſeth them about with favour as a ſhield. *The way of the juſt is uprightneſs: thou moſt upright doeſt weigh the path of the Juſt*, Iſa. 26. 7. Integrity is the ground of hope. This gave *Job* a certainty of his coming out of affliction, and of a glorious reſtauration, *Job* 13. 18. *I have ordered my cauſe, I know I ſhall be juſtified.* This was that *Hezekiah* pleaded under Gods correction, *Iſa.* 38. 3. And *Nehemiah* under his enemies rage and oppoſition: *Think upon me my God for good.* Chriſts Righteouſneſs is only pleadable at the bar of Gods Juſtice, but our own in the Court of his mercy. A man may as well rear a building on a quagmire, or quick-ſand, as build a juſt hope on Hypocriſie; but righteouſneſs is a ſure foundation. The morning ſtar being once up and viſible, it's never very dark: Such as walk alwaies in the view of their uprightneſs, have alwaies

alwaies ſome glimmerings of comfort, and are never hopeleſs and deſolate. This was Gods own aſſignation of the reaſon of *Noahs* deliverance, *Gen.* 7. 1. *Thee only have I found righteous in this generation.* He that walks uprightly, walks ſecurely. When men are upright to God, to men, exerciſe a conſcience void of offence in duties of the firſt and the ſecond Table; keep themſelves from their iniquities, and have reſpect to all Gods Commandments, and whatſoever comes on them, do not forget God and his Covenant, they are upon the faireſt ground of ſecurity. The Prophet *Amos* puts them into not a bare capacity, but at leaſt a probability of mercy, *Amos* 5. 15. *Hate the evil, ſeek good, and eſtabliſh Judgement in the gate, it may be the Lord God of Hoſts will be gracious to the remnant of Joſeph.* Nay the Prophet *Iſaiah* goes further, and puts them under a certainty, *Iſa.* 33. 16. (When Hypocrites were bundled as thorns, or packt as brands into the devouring fire of Gods wrath) who ſhould abide now? *He that walketh righteouſly— He ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munition of Rocks: bread ſhall be given him, his waters ſhall be ſure.*

Fifthly, A reſolved ſingularity, and couragious zeal and magnanimity for God in the worſt of times, both as to doing and ſuffering. When Chriſtians ſhine with an eminent luſtre of piety, like ſtars in a dark night, with greater brightneſs, and burn with an holy zeal, as fire in froſty weather, alwaies hotteſt, are none ſuch of the times, and do not only keep themſelves untainted from the ſins they embrace, but ſe on the

duties they oppoſe; reſolving with *Joſhua*, that they and their houſe will ſerve the Lord, and with *Daniel*, that they will as formerly (notwithſtanding all prohibitions to the contrary) make their ſupplication to the God of Heaven: They will keep up private family duties, publick attendances, though all give them up; maintain thoſe duties of Religion moſt zealouſly, ſtrenuouſly, and induſtriouſly, that are moſt momentous, though moſt oppoſed and deſpiſed; dancing before the Lords Ark, though laughed to ſcorn by the *Michaels* of the world. Though Princes ſpeak againſt them, they will meditate and ſpeak of Gods ſtatutes. They will appear for God, when all appear againſt him; as did *Elijah*, whom God wonderfully ſecured; and *Paul*, whom he ſtood by miraculouſly; and *Luther*, whoſe language was *fiat juſtitia ruat Cœlum*, whom God ſignally protected at *Worms*, and elſewhere, though he were the only butt his pretended holineſs then had to ſhoot at. When a man is reſolved to conſult duty, and not ſafety, to ſuffer before he ſins, to burn in a fiery furnace, before bow to a graven Image; and with an holy fortitude, to ſtand up for God againſt the ſins of the time and place, though he hath none to back him, though all the neighbourhood, Town, City, be otherwiſe affected, (as it was with him as to *Baals* Altars, and *Paul* to the *Athenian* worſhips) and is determined to venture all for God, and in his Cauſe, with a *Cæſarem vebo* in his mouth, if I periſh, I periſh; and can confidently look danger, bonds, death in the face, being willing with *Paul*, for the hope of *Iſrael*, to

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be bound with this chain, *Act.* 28. 20. As holy fear, ſo this invincible faith, and undaunted courage, is an evident token of ſalvation, and that from God, *Phil.* 1. 28. Whom in the world ſhould God help, if not them that help with him? or ſtand cloſe to, if not thoſe who ſtand faſt to him? diſtinguiſhing duty ſhall certainly be rewarded with diſtinguiſhing mercy.

Secondly, At what ſpecial times may Gods People look for help in time of mens violence and oppreſſion? Let me reſolve that one queſtion (in caſe the cauſe of the People of God ſhould be brought to an extremity) and leave it with them as a fortification of their hopes and ſpirits. Now, though as it's impoſſible for us infallibly to determine the periods of Gods grace to ſinners, when abuſed, ſo the times and ſeaſons of his giving out mercy and ſalvation to his People, when wanted; (times being in his hand) yet ſo far as we have the Scripture for our guide, we may aſſign ſome particular and extraordinary caſes, wherein help is promiſed, and ſo may be juſtly expected.

As Firſt, When Gods Cauſe lies a bleeding, and the general concern and intereſt of Religion is at ſtake. God is jealous for his great Name. Thus *Joſhua* pleads when *Iſrael* fell before their enemies in battel, *cap.* 7. 9. And *Jeremiah*, *cap.* 14. 9. *We are called by thy Name, leave us not*; and *verſ.* 21. *Do not abhor us for thy Names ſake, do not diſgrace the Throne of thy glory*— When the enemy houted Gods People, pointing with the finger at them, Theſe are the People of the Lord, he had pity for his holy Name, *Ezek.* 36. 21. When

the whole intereſt of Religion, and Gods people muſt go off at a blow, God will ſtep between the Axe and them. We have ſuch a memorable example of this, in Gods deliverance of the whole body of the *Jews* from *Haman*'s conſpiracy, as the defeatment thereof may be a ſtanding encouragement to his people in all ages.

Secondly, When a cloud of reproach and ſcandal is caſt upon his Peoples innocency and integrity, and thereupon ariſeth an unjuſt oppreſſion of them. This was *Job*'s caſe; all along his Friends falſly accuſed him, but his God did compurgate him, and ſo *Davids*, as appears almoſt in every Pſalm, where he now appeals to God, and makes proteſts of his innocency; as *Pſal.* 7. 3. then prays for relief, *Pſal.* 38. *ult.* and 71. 11, 12. and 109. 26. profeſſeth his hope in God notwithſtanding, *Pſal.* 35. 15. promiſeth himſelf redreſs, *Pſal.* 37. 6. So *Jeremiah*, cap. 20. 11. and the Church, *Mic.* 7. 8, 10. who promiſe themſelves ſalvation, and propheſie their enemies deſtruction, upon their ſlanders and ſcandals caſt upon them. God will take part with his people, what is done to them he takes as done to himſelf, whether in way of kindneſs or abuſe. As they vindicate his Name and glory in the World, ſo will he theirs from all reproach put upon it.

Thirdly, When there is a failure and diſappointment of all humane help. This is the Pſalmiſts argument, *Pſal.* 44. *ult.* and the ground of his plea, *Pſal.* 79. 8. *Let thy tender mercies ſpeedily prevent us, for we are brought very low.* — When *Pharaoh* ſaid, *The Iſraelites were intangled, the Wilderneſs had ſhut them in*, God comes and cuts a paſſage for

for them. *Exod.* 14. 3. God commonly helps his People at the loweſt; the taking the weakeſt part is to him no diſadvantage. When *vain is the help of man*, and the cauſe is concluded deſperate for want of an Advocate, then God is called in by our Prophet, *Pſal.* 12. 1. *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth,— Cum nemini obtrudi poteſt*— Pſal. 116. 6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.* When *Sion* is called an Outcaſt, and no man ſeeks after her, then God chooſeth to have mercy on her, *Jer.* 30. 17.

Fourthly, When the Enemies of Gods Truth and Cauſe blaſpheme his Name, and inſult and triumph over his people. *Whom haſt thou reproached*, ſaith God to *Rabſhaketh?* Iſa. 37. 23. There's the ground of his appearance againſt him: The King of Heaven may pardon his Peoples rebellions, but revilings are too ſaucy for ſubjects to give, or the infinite and eternal God to bear from a vile worm, a ſinfull and mortal creature. It's time for God to ariſe, when wicked men thus make void his Law, and ſo far uſurp upon his Supremacy and Prerogative, as to offer a competition with him, who, he or they, ſhall be Lord Controller in the World. When the *Aſſyrians* talked blaſphemouſly, *that God was the God of the hills, and not of the valleys*, therefore did he deliver them into *Iſrael's* hand, 1 *King.* 20. 28. God dare wraſtle or engage with them, though on diſadvantagious ground. This argument the Church uſeth for deliverance, *Pſal.* 74. 10, and ſtrongly urgeth, *Pſal.* 79. 10, 11, 12.— and the cruelty and blaſphemy of the enemy may prevail with God ſometimes, when cannot the Prayers of his Saints and People, *Iſa.* 47. 6, 7, 8. God will

will ſave the afflicted People, and bring down the high and proud looks, *Pſal.* 18. 27. It's obſervable, when God aſſigns to his people the reaſon of the expulſion of the Nations, and the introduction of *Iſrael* in their room, he gives it thus, *Not for your righteouſneſs but their wickedneſs*, Deut. 9. 5. when Saints holineſs cannot avail for mercy, ſinners iniquity may call for juſtice.

Fifthly, When the ſpirits of the Saints begin to deſpond and fail, and yet are carried out with ſerious humiliation for their ſin, and (recovering theſe fits and qualms) with out-goings of Faith and Prayer to Heaven. When Chriſt comes, there will ſcarce be Faith in the Earth: when the hearts of Gods people begin to ſwoon, he will contend no longer, leſt their ſpirits ſhould fail before him. When the wicked are fleſht and pufft up with vain hopes, God breaks their bones aſunder, and their horn in pieces: when Gods people are as dry bones he lifes and fleſhes them, *Ezek.* 37. When the Queſtion is asked, *By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe, for he is ſmall*, the anſwer is, *The Lord repented for this*, Amos 7. 2, 3. God will not always ſuffer the rod of the wicked to reſt on the lot of the righteous, leſt he puts forth his hand to iniquity, *Pſal.* 125. 3. God paſſes by his People, when as tall Cedars, and beholds them when low and weak Shrubs; he delights in them when in an abject low condition, and ſhews them mercy. When the Locuſts do moſt over-run the *Caſſians*, then the *Seleucidian* Birds come and are their devourers and deſtroyers. God is willing his people ſometimes ſhould be brought to that paſs, that they know not whither to turn, that ſo they may know what their God can, and will bring

bring about for them. When Gods people are laid upon their backs, then is a fit time for him to take them up into his arms, and put them into his bosom. Especially, when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled by their afflictions (though oft-times not so sincerely, at least not throughly) God will come in for their help, as *Judg.* 10. 2 *Chron.* 12.— Especially where there is a spirit of true humiliation, Faith and Prayer, that conjunction is a sure Prognostick of mercy, and sign of deliverance, *Zach.* 12. 10. compared with *cap.* 13. 1.— No sooner *Daniel* begins his Prayer, but the Captivity makes its end. *Hos.* 5. *ult.*— *I will goe to my place till they acknowledge*— When they come to seeking, God soon comes to saving. God never puts his people hard on begging, or inclines them to asking, but he stands ready handed with, and fully bent and disposed to mercy. When the Sea gets into the Ship, and *Peter* cryes out, Christ reacheth out his arm to save him,

Sixthly, Let this be a ground of adherence and firm conjunction and cleaving to God at all times, always cleave to this God who is such an help, with full purpose of heart. As *Ruth* to *Naomi* going where he goes, and living where he lives. Let nothing separate you from your God. Like the Spaniel, couch close to your Master: It's good for you to draw near to God; lose all rather than lose him, part with all the World before him. Better God your Friend to stand by you, than all the World without him. God is faithfull to you, be you so to him, and though all else do, do not you forsake him. Forget your Kindred and Fathers house; love not father or mother, wife or children,

dren, houſe or land, but hate them, if coming in competition with him. Throw off your Father (as holy *Jerom* ſaid) though he hangs about your neck, and trample on your mother, though ſhe lay in the way, to go out unto him. Give not up the cauſe of God to Satan, or the common Enemy, becauſe ye meet with a little trouble. Though the Captain hath not preſent relief, he will not deliver up the City, if in any hope or expectation of it, but hold out if poſſible; he knows not how nigh he is relief. Sacrifice not God's intereſt, help may come before you expect it. Chriſtians, on your firſt coming in, you gave your ſelves up to the Lord, and indeed as that Noble perſon ſaid, In undertaking Religion you might be deceived, if you thought to ſave any thing but your Souls. Oh take heed of making a breach of promiſe. Take heed of uſing any ſiniſter courſe, any unlawfull and indirect means, to evade the ſufferings of the Goſpel never accept a deliverance which is worſe than bondage, better have help Gods way than your own, as finding it, than as making it, Infinitely farr better that trouble which ends in peace, than that peace which ends in trouble. Fight therefore the good fight of Faith, ſo as at laſt ye may lay hold on the Crown of eternal life. So run as ye may obtain. Go on ſecurely and couragiouſly in the way of your duty whatſoever occurres, fear the Lord only, and keep his way. *Eſther*, though under ſtrict interdiction, yet ventures to approach the King, having faſted and prayed with her Maydens, in hope of divine benediction: The Apoſtles though under a prohibition (if not a ſuſpenſion) to preach chuſe to obey God before man, *Act.* 5. 29. Be neither drawn or courted by the fawning allure-

allurements of the world, nor yet frighted by it's terrours, to give up, or in, in your profeſſion. Take our Saviours advice, *Luk.* 12. 4. *Fear not him that can only kill the body, but rather him that can deſtroy both body and ſoul in Hell.*

Laſtly, A word to ſinners, and ſtrangers from God and his hope and help concludes all. This offers firſt a word of direction to poor ſinners, whether they muſt go for help: They are all lapſed fallen creatures, plunged into a ſtate of guilt and corruption, brought under the ſupremacy and dominion of Satan, and have no power or ſufficiency of themſelves to recover, but God alone is their help, *Hoſ.* 13. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thy help to be found.* Man fell by his own free will, but cannot recover without Gods free grace, *Homo libertatem quam accepit niſi Chriſto liberante non recipit*; as Saints therefore muſt bleſs him, ſo ſinners go to him as their only help; go to him for light, life, by Prayer, in the uſe of Ordinances, which are *media cultus*, and *gratiæ* too; and though God will not hear you as ſinners, he may as creatures.

Secondly, Labour all to get an intereſt in God, that he may be your help. Time may, nay, will come, when you will ſtand in need of an help. You may have many ſtorms in your journey to eternity. It's good in a Sun-ſhine to provide for a ſtorm. A day of affliction may come, of death and diſſolution muſt come. A ſword, a plague, a fire, a famine, a captivity may come, and what will ye do in the evil day? All worldly helps will then be in vain; ye may kindle a fire of your own ſparks, but the end will be to lye down in ſorrow. You may with him that took up an hand-full of Gloworms in a dark night,

night, hope to warm your fingers with them, but it will be a falſe fire, and afford no heat with its light. Theſe Gloworms may ſhine till you come to the light of Sun or Candle. Theſe fair-fac'd nothings may pleaſe till you come to be convinced of a better beauty, but then will vaniſh. What will it profit to have a little comfort from them for a moment, and at laſt be caſt into the helliſh dungeon? Though ye have all creatures for you, and God againſt you, your caſe is as ſad and miſerable, as had you God for you, and all the world againſt you, it were comfortable. Time may come too, that you may have all the world againſt you, and the Devil too, yea, your own conſciences, and what will ye do, if ye have not a God, a Chriſt to ſtand for you? Created-comforts cannot help you, if God hath once forſaken you; though he can ſupply their abſence, who is the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and make day, though there be not the ſtar of any creature viſible, yet they cannot his. If the Sun be gone down, it's night for all the ſtars. They have no Oyl for themſelves, much leſs can afford to others. There is no truſt in riches, friends, men, Angels; they are all a vain hope. The Parent may leave his Child, the Huſband his Wife, the friend his friend, when time of trial comes. God hath ſtood on Mount *Ebal*, and blaſted all carnal confidence, as well as on Mount *Gerizim*, and bleſſed confidence in himſelf: Yea, he may juſtly give us up to our own truſt, and thoſe things we have confided in, if we repoſe in any thing ſhort of himſelf, ſo he did them, *Jer.* 2. 28. And will the creatures Mantle be a ſufficient covering to us? Will the great Tree of outward mercies, profeſſion, priviledges, protect

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us under the ſoaking and laſting ſtorm of Gods wrath? The whole 49 *Pſalm* is a conviction of the vanity of all the Pageantry of this world. They are as birds, or a ſtring that at one time or other will deceive us. And is not God in the mean time, a neceſſary, free, univerſal, ſole, ſufficient help? Who ever truſted in the world, and was not deceived? and who ever truſted in God, and was diſappointed? The ends of the earth look to him and are ſaved — O ceaſe then from theſe lying vanities, and endeavour to make God your God, that ſo he may become your help. And if you would do ſo, labour firſt, to get an humble ſenſe of your own helpleſs and hopeleſs condition by nature. Bethink your ſelves, and ſee the plague of your own hearts. As long as the ſoul hath any crutch to lean on, it will never go alone; while it knows whither to run, it will never go to its God. O labour to be weary and heavy laden in your ſelves, and diſclaim all creature-dependance, as *Paul* did, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8. Renounce all for Chriſt, and Gods free grace and mercy in him. And when in this wilderneſs, lean on the arm of your Beloved. Secondly, Fly to Gods Name and Covenant by faith in Chriſt. If ever God be yours, it muſt be through Chriſt. For there is no other Name; God hath laid help on his almighty arm, you muſt lay your hope there: All Gods help runs through Chriſt: he hath determined never to pardon one guilt, or give out one dram of grace, but through his blood. He is the only daiſmen, the true *Sampſon*, by whoſe ſtrength, the heavy weights of ſin and wrath may be removed your ſouls. All the ſouls freſh ſprings are in him: He is the well head of ſalvation. Without union, no intereſt or influence.

ence. No flying or abiding Gods presence, escapeing, or enduring his wrath, unless your souls get under the skirt of his love. He that would have interest in God by any other proxy, must expect salvation by a deputy only. O come to him then by faith, venture on him as the Lepers did on the Camp, 2 *King.* 7. . Do not only take Ropes about your necks, and put Sackcloth about your loyns, but come before this King of Heaven, he is a merciful King— And thirdly and lastly, Strike Covenant with God, enter into a confederacy with him. Kings keep those confederate, and in league with them. The wickeds is a vain, a strumpets confidence, that challenge God as their Father and Husband, and yet wantonize from him, and care not for his company and communion, *Jer.* 3. 4. A good conscience only is the ground of a good hope and confidence, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. God may help and save by the wicked, but never will he be the Saviour of them. Break off from sin then by righteousness, and engage in, yea, keep covenant with God. There's a league both offensive and defensive between God and his People, and the Promise made to *Abraham* (observing the conditions) stands good to all his faithful children, *Gen.* 15. 1. If we walk before God, and be perfect, he will be our shield, and our exceeding great reward. To conclude all with the Apostles options, *Rom.* 15.13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost*— And 2 *Thes.* 2. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.*

FINIS.